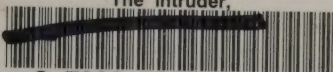


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
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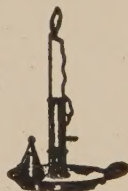
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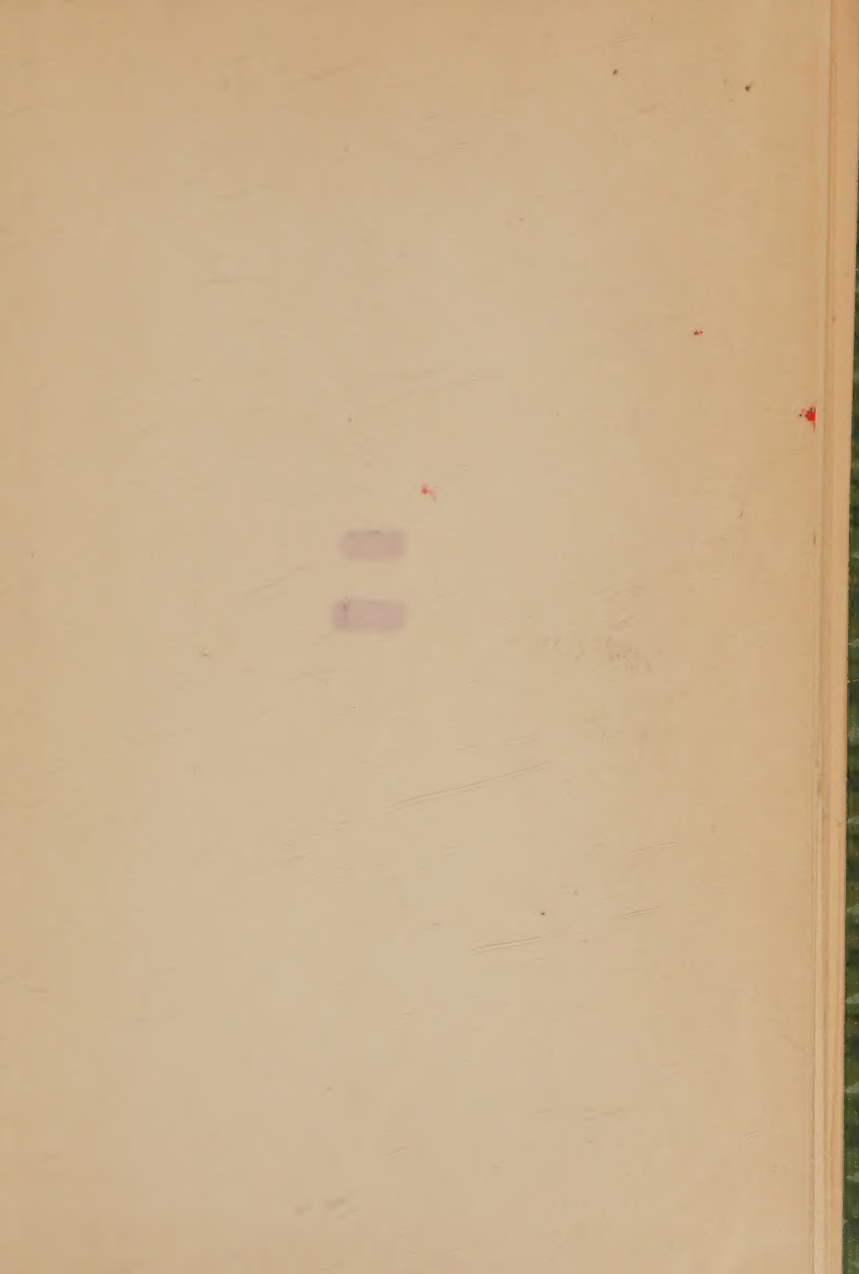


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THE INTRUDER

THE INTRUDER

795

BY
PAUL ELDRIDGE

NEW YORK
THE MACAULAY COMPANY

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NOTE

"THE INTRUDER" has two entirely different **THIRD ACTS**, each perfectly consonant with the rest of the play. These two different solutions are not in the nature of experiment, trying to discover which is the proper ending, but logical developments of the first two acts.

When produced, either **THIRD ACT** is sufficient. It is suggested, however, that both **THIRD ACTS** be given at the same performance, one following the other, thus serving as a theatrical novelty and as a dramatic unity.

CHARACTERS OF THE PLAY

DR. JOHN WESTON

MRS. WESTON

KATY

WOMAN

MAN

YOUNG WOMAN

NURSE

ACT I

Waiting-room of Doctor Weston's office.

ACT II

The same. Six years later. Late afternoon.

ACT III

The same. The next morning.

THE INTRUDER

ACT I

SCENE: *Waiting room of DOCTOR WESTON. In the REAR wall, a trifle LEFT CENTER, double sliding doors which, when open, disclose part of the office proper with its white enameled furniture. To the RIGHT, another door opening into a small hallway which leads to other parts of the house. In the RIGHT wall, a wide, set-in window. In the LEFT wall, a door leading to outer hall and the street. RIGHT, in front of the window, a carved flat-top desk with telephone and appointment book. To the LEFT of desk, a large upholstered wing-chair. To the LEFT CENTER of room, a lounge backed by a long narrow Davenport table, on which are magazines, ash tray and table lamp. In the REAR, near the left wall, a phonograph. The rest of the furniture, as well as the decorations, are appropriate and in good taste.*

TIME: *An evening in the Spring.*

AT RISE: *THE WOMAN, about forty years of age, sits near the window, holding an umbrella; in the wing-chair, THE MAN, smoking a pipe. He is of indeterminate age and coughs from time to time.*

It is raining. There is an occasional flash of lightning and rumble of thunder which increases in intensity as the act progresses.

(The office doors open and KATY appears. She is about twenty, wholesome and capable. She enters and closes the doors.)

WOMAN

When is the doctor coming?

KATY

I expect him any minute now.

WOMAN

I've been waiting for—

(Looks at her watch.)

Thirty-two minutes—to be exact.

KATY

As long as that?

WOMAN

Thirty-two minutes. I never make mistakes about the time. I live by the clock. . . . Are you the new nurse?

KATY

No—I am just assisting doctor—while the regular nurse is on vacation.

MAN

A little present for the doctor.

KATY

(As she takes package from him.)

Oh, thanks.

(She places package on desk.)

(To WOMAN)

Shall I take your umbrella?

WOMAN

Thank you.

(KATY takes umbrella from her.)

KATY

I'll let you know just as soon as the doctor comes.

(Goes out hall door.)

WOMAN

(Addressing MAN.)

I live by the clock—

MAN

We all do.

(Coughs.)

WOMAN

I set my watch twice a day. I must know the exact time. If my watch is fast, it means so many minutes less of life that I've lived, doesn't it?

(MAN nods.)

And, if it's slow—

MAN

Vice versa—

WOMAN

Yes, it's terrible when the heart seems to dash ahead of the clock!

MAN

Or—vice versa.

WOMAN

But your trouble isn't the heart. It's the lungs, isn't it?

(MAN *nods.*)

You shouldn't smoke.

MAN

Doctor said it didn't matter.

(*Laughs drily.*)

I don't know whether he meant it wasn't harmful in general, or it didn't matter in my case, anyhow.

WOMAN

Why didn't you ask him?

MAN

I preferred not to—embarrass him.

WOMAN

I imagine he would be embarrassed a little. Dr. Weston never likes to tell you the truth.

MAN

I guess not. He's too tender-hearted for a physician.

WOMAN

He's been treating me now for over ten years—in fact, to be exact, ten years and—ten years and five months—when I had my first attack. Well, he really never told me how serious my condition was.

MAN

It couldn't have been so serious, since it's over ten years that he's been treating you—and you—seem quite well.

WOMAN

(Displeased.)

Do I? Do you really think so? For that matter—no one would ever take you for sick.

MAN

You can't go by looks.

(Coughs.)

I have only a few more months to live—I know that.

WOMAN

No! You never can tell. I have a cousin who has been suffering like you—oh—for over twenty years—that's right—twenty-one years next November—and she's still alive. We've been expecting her death for so long that at times we speak of her as dead. It's really funny. We say: "Mary used to do this—Mary used to say that"—just as if she was really dead.

MAN

Maybe she really is—who knows?

WOMAN

Oh, no! She's more optimistic than anybody I've ever known. People who suffer from lung trouble are very optimistic. The germ, you know, has that peculiarity.

(KATY enters from hall followed by YOUNG WOMAN.)

MAN

I wonder who originated that lie?

YOUNG WOMAN

Isn't the doctor in?

KATY

He'll be here very soon.

YOUNG WOMAN

(*Looking at the two patients.*)

I guess I'll have a long wait.

(*Takes magazine and peruses it.*)

(KATY goes out hall door.)

MAN

You know, never a day passes but I plan to commit suicide.

WOMAN

You should never think of that! Never! My heart beats like a hammer. You should not have mentioned it.

MAN

Why not? What is there so terrible about dying? In your case, for instance, the heart would stop beating—like a hammer as you say—that's all.

WOMAN

The very thought of it—kills me almost. Death!

MAN

As if I were going to commit suicide here! Or for that matter, to-day! Certainly I shall not do it before I see the doctor—once more.

WOMAN

Please don't talk about it!

YOUNG WOMAN

What I don't like about suicide is the messiness of it all. I love beauty—

(Sighs.)

Beauty!

(Seats herself on sofa.)

MAN

(To YOUNG WOMAN.)

Does my smoking annoy you?

YOUNG WOMAN

Not at all. On the contrary. I love it. A pipe is a beautiful thing. I hate cigars! My husband doesn't want to get used to a pipe.

(Sighs deeply.)

WOMAN

(Grumbling.)

Husbands! They do everything to spite you!

(MAN laughs a little ironically.)

YOUNG WOMAN

My husband doesn't even believe I am sick.

WOMAN

What is your trouble, if I may ask? Here we are like members of the same family—at least I feel as though we were—

MAN

All people are members of the same family when they are condemned to death.

WOMAN

(Glaring at him.)

Of course we must die; but what has that got to do with the case?

MAN

Nothing. Nothing whatever. I was merely quoting an old Egyptian philosopher.

WOMAN

The Egyptians! They were all fakers—murderers!

YOUNG WOMAN

I am sick—dreadfully sick; but no one believes me.

MAN

You look splendid, madam.

YOUNG WOMAN

(Ironically.)

Really! Oh, thank you!

WOMAN

What really is the trouble with you?

YOUNG WOMAN

I don't know. If I only knew! I feel a great void in me—as if I were an empty well—dark—chilly. . . . Oh, I feel like shivering!

MAN

Why don't you—if that will make you feel better?

YOUNG WOMAN

*(Glares at him.)**(To WOMAN.)*

My husband claims it's imagination—

WOMAN

Oh—husbands!

YOUNG WOMAN

Then, it's my imagination that's sick, isn't it? I love beauty and all around me is nothing but ugliness.

MAN

No wonder they say the blind are happy. . . . What you need is a lot of amusement.

YOUNG WOMAN

Theaters bore me. It's too much make-believe, without being convincing. At the movies, my husband always falls asleep and snores. It's horrible! He—he—always snores. It's simply horrible!

WOMAN

All men snore!

(MAN looking from one to the other, smiles ironically.)

Have you tried chiropractors? They are very good. I go to one every week. It may only be your spine—

YOUNG WOMAN

I couldn't stand any one beating my back!

MAN

In Russia a woman never considered herself loved by her husband unless he beat her back.

YOUNG WOMAN

Horrible!

WOMAN

Brutes!

MAN

Yes, but just think of how many nervous wives were cured—indirectly—that way. I am sure it was Nature's kind way of compensation.

WOMAN

(*To YOUNG WOMAN.*)

What does the doctor say about your case?

YOUNG WOMAN

(*Enthusiastically.*)

He is the only man who understands me!

WOMAN

He understands everybody.

YOUNG WOMAN

He is simply wonderful! After I see him I feel fine for days; but then—it begins again.

MAN

He is—rather good-looking.

YOUNG WOMAN

He's handsome! You know, not the vulgar kind of beauty, interesting beauty—all soul! I love the soul!

WOMAN

Why don't you try Christian Science? I'm trying it. It works wonders. Naturally, the heart can't be cured that way, but I know of a woman who had liver trouble. All the doctors gave her up. After all, what do doctors know? . . . She had four months' treatment and eight months' absent treatment—and she is as fine as a fiddle now!

MAN

If you're a Christian Scientist, it doesn't really matter if you are cured or not, since you can't die anyhow. Besides, what's a little liver trouble if you can go on living forever?

YOUNG WOMAN

(Looks toward the window, as a flash of lightning is seen.)

It's still raining. . . . I wonder when the doctor will come.

WOMAN

I'll let you see him before me, if you are in a hurry.

YOUNG WOMAN

No, no!

MAN

It's all the same to me—

YOUNG WOMAN

No, no! I prefer to be the last.

(Silence.)

WOMAN

Do you know Mrs. Weston?

YOUNG WOMAN

No.

WOMAN

She's a fine woman; and you know, I hear they get along splendidly.

YOUNG WOMAN

Do they?

WOMAN

You seem to doubt it.

YOUNG WOMAN

Doubt what?

WOMAN

That they get along so well.

YOUNG WOMAN

I don't doubt it. I'm simply not interested, that's all.

MAN

It's more interesting if a man doesn't get along with his wife—isn't it?

YOUNG WOMAN

Perhaps—

MAN

When there is plenty of elbow room, so to say.

*(Laughs lightly.)**(Enter KATY.)*

KATY

The doctor has come. He will see you in a moment.

(Goes into the office and closes the doors.)

WOMAN

(Sternly.)

What do you mean by elbow room?

MAN

Elbow room for—romance.

(Laughs.)

A friend of mine was suffering from some indefinite vagueness, emptiness, chilliness, etc., etc., just like this young lady—

YOUNG WOMAN

Yes—yes—?

MAN

He went to a Swami—you know, those turbaned “seers” with deep, mysterious eyes—

YOUNG WOMAN

Yes—?

MAN

And do you know what remedy he suggested?

YOUNG WOMAN

What?

MAN

Divorce! A good solid dose of divorce!

YOUNG WOMAN

(Disappointed.)

Oh!

MAN

He divorced, and now he is at last happy—with another woman.

WOMAN

It won't last.

(Enter KATY from office.)

KATY

(To WOMAN.)

Will you step in, please?

*(WOMAN goes into office.)**(KATY follows and closes doors behind her.)*

YOUNG WOMAN

(Looking at magazine.)

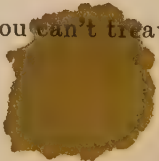
This is interesting.

(Reading aloud.)

There is no such thing as disease, only diseased people. Now, what does it really mean?

MAN

That each man is a law unto himself. You can't treat all people alike.



YOUNG WOMAN

How true!

MAN

There is one infallible cure, however, for all who suffer.

YOUNG WOMAN

What's that?

(MAN makes a motion to his temple with his pipe as if to shoot himself.)

I'm not afraid of death, only of its ugliness. I love beauty.

(Sighs deeply.)

MAN

It's merely a point of view. Why is life more beautiful than death?

(Coughing.)

Oh, how can any one keep his dignity coughing forever!

YOUNG WOMAN

What does the doctor tell you?

MAN

Exactly nothing!

YOUNG WOMAN

Doesn't he tell you that you will get well?

MAN

Words, words, words. Always words. I have only a few more months to live. I know.

YOUNG WOMAN

It must be awful to feel that way.

MAN

Oh, no. Life isn't so precious, after all—is it?

(KATY enters with WOMAN and shows her out.)

KATY

(To MAN.)

Come in, please.

(Exit MAN.)

(To YOUNG WOMAN.)

Just a few more minutes and the doctor will see you.

(Goes to desk and sits.)

YOUNG WOMAN

(Looking at KATY and sighing.)

He is wonderful, isn't he?

KATY

Who?

YOUNG WOMAN

Dr. Weston—

KATY

He is.

YOUNG WOMAN

He is the only man who makes you forget ugliness.

KATY

Yes?



YOUNG WOMAN

(Looking intently at her.)

It must do you good to see him every day.

KATY

He is very nice, and so is Mrs. Weston.

YOUNG WOMAN

Oh, is she?

KATY

Very nice.

YOUNG WOMAN

Is he happy?

KATY

Of course he is—generally—

YOUNG WOMAN

Generally—?

(Office door opens and MAN appears.)

KATY

I mean he doesn't seem so to-day—I guess because Mrs. Weston isn't home.

YOUNG WOMAN

(Disappointed.)

Oh!

MAN

(To DOCTOR, off.)

Thank you, Doctor. Good-bye.

(MAN enters and looks for umbrella.)

KATY

(To YOUNG WOMAN.)

Will you step in, please?

*(Follows her to office door, closes it after her
and crosses to desk.)*

MAN

I had an umbrella.

KATY

It's in the hall.

MAN

It's very important to have an umbrella, you know.
(Lights his pipe.)

KATY

It's raining hard, isn't it?

MAN

It's always raining.

KATY

Always?

MAN

Metaphorically speaking, you know. . . . By the way, Miss, did you ever hear doctor tell any of his patients who suffer from lung trouble that it's all right to smoke a pipe?

KATY

I'm not the nurse, so I couldn't say. I'm just assisting while the nurse is away.

MAN

But it stands to reason that smoking is very harmful, doesn't it?

KATY

I should imagine so.

MAN

But those who are condemned to death are always given special privileges—aren't they?

(Smiling ironically.)

I am allowed to smoke just as much as I want.

KATY

If Doctor permits it—

MAN

I have only a few months to live at the outside.

KATY

Doctor cures most of his patients.

MAN

He can cure mainly women who suffer from uglionophobia.

KATY

What's that?

MAN

Oh, anything—such as husbands who snore at the movies—

(Hesitating at the door.)

Don't forget the present, Miss. It's pre-war.

(He goes out.)

(KATY looks after him, amused.)

(She looks at herself in mirror, straightens her

hair and goes out door, RIGHT CENTER, removing meanwhile her nurse's apron.)

(Office door is opened and DOCTOR WESTON appears with YOUNG WOMAN.)

YOUNG WOMAN

(As they advance into room.)

Twice a day the powders and once the tonic—

DOCTOR

Religiously.

YOUNG WOMAN

I feel better already—much better, in fact. . . . But Doctor, is there no permanent cure?

DOCTOR

Well, there might be one. It's a little harder than taking powders and tonics, though.

YOUNG WOMAN

I'll do anything to get well. You don't know how I suffer!

DOCTOR

(Quietly, marking each word.)

We cure ourselves by forgetting ourselves.

YOUNG WOMAN

Yes, Doctor.

DOCTOR

Think it over.

YOUNG WOMAN

We cure ourselves by forgetting ourselves.

DOCTOR

Precisely. It's a platitude, no doubt, but absolutely true!

YOUNG WOMAN

Yes, Doctor, whatever you say—

DOCTOR

Come and see me again before long.

YOUNG WOMAN

I will, Doctor.

(They shake hands.)

Good-bye, Doctor.

DOCTOR

Good-bye.

(Sees YOUNG WOMAN out.)

(He crosses and seats himself at desk, busying himself with appointment book.)

(KATY re-enters from house wearing a rain-coat and carrying an umbrella. As she passes desk, she hesitates.)

KATY

The patient who was just here left this package.

DOCTOR

(Opening package.)

Oh, yes—his usual farewell gift. Every time he comes he is quite sure it's the last time.

KATY

Is he really so sick, Doctor?

DOCTOR

He may outlive us.

KATY

(Laughing.)

He said it was pre-war.

DOCTOR

(Removing two bottles from package; laughs.)

I'll drink to his health—

KATY

Shall I bring you a glass, Doctor?

DOCTOR

Yes, please.

(KATY goes out door, RIGHT CENTER.)

(Telephone rings.)

(Answering.)

Yes—yes—no better? Not worse? That's good! You have no right to despair, madam. Follow my instructions carefully. Yes, I'll be home. If there is any change, call me up. Yes, I shall come. Not at all. Yes, yes, I shall come. Good-bye.

KATY

(Returns with glass.)

Shall I put it here, Doctor?

DOCTOR

Yes, thank you.

(Places glass on desk and starts to go.)

(DOCTOR proceeds to open bottle. From here on he drinks a little from time to time.)

Katy, I forgot to tell you. I've heard from Mrs. Weston. She writes that she won't be back for another week or two. She is just beginning to feel better.

KATY

Then I'd better not fix up her room yet?

DOCTOR

I'll tell you when to do it.

KATY

Thank you, Doctor.

(Starts for door.)

DOCTOR

(Watching her kindly.)

Are you going out in weather like this?

(Turns to the window and looks out.)

It's going to rain the whole night.

KATY

It's not far.

DOCTOR

What isn't far?

KATY

Where I'm going—the movies around the corner.

DOCTOR

Ah, yes.

KATY

(Starts to go; hesitates.)

Do you need anything?

DOCTOR

No.

KATY

Then I may go, Doctor?

DOCTOR

I advise you not to go out on a night like this. It's very nasty. You might catch cold. There's a surprising epidemic of pneumonia for this time of the year.

KATY

I'm not afraid.

DOCTOR

(Smiling.)

I shouldn't like to hear it said that any one in Dr. Weston's house wasn't properly taken care of.

KATY

No one would say that, Doctor—no one! Everybody knows better than that. All my friends envied me when I first came here.

DOCTOR

I'm glad to hear that. And—do you—feel the same about it, Katy?

KATY

Indeed I do. Mrs. Weston is so kind to me and—so are you.

DOCTOR
(*Smiling.*)

Thank you.

KATY

I feel quite at home here. In fact, better—much better. At home I wasn't happy. . . .

DOCTOR

Ah—

KATY

Not happy at all! My father . . . but excuse me, Doctor—I'm talking too much—

DOCTOR

On the contrary, I assure you, Katy. I am very much interested in what you say.

KATY

My father . . . but it's better not to talk about it I am—happy here—and the rest is forgotten.

DOCTOR

You are wise, Katy. The rest—should be forgotten. . . .

KATY

I'm very foolish. If I may go—then, I—
(*Makes as if to go.*)

DOCTOR

(Fatherly.)

I wouldn't go. It's rather dangerous.

KATY

(Smiling bitterly.)

Not for me. I'm accustomed to worse things than rain. If blows don't kill, why should a soft rain? The rain isn't as hard as a club, is it?

DOCTOR

Poor child! But you promised to forget all that.

KATY

Yes.

DOCTOR

And having forgotten, the rain might prove—very hard. Therefore, I advise you not to go, unless—unless some one expects you—waits for you—?

KATY

(Very seriously.)

No, Doctor, no one expects me—

DOCTOR

(Playfully.)

No Prince Charming—?

KATY

No, Doctor, absolutely not.

DOCTOR

It's hardly possible, Katy—a pretty girl like you, not to have—

KATY

I'm not pretty, Doctor.

DOCTOR

You don't know. You can't tell. It's for those who see you to judge.

KATY

I know I'm not pretty; and as for any Prince Charming . . .

DOCTOR

You're a strange girl, Katy.

(Silence.)

KATY

(Making an energetic motion toward the door.)

Well, good-night, Doctor.

(Goes to door.)

DOCTOR

Don't go—yet.

KATY

(Looks at him closely.)

Of course, if you order me to stay—

DOCTOR

No, no. I don't order you to stay. You're perfectly free to go wherever you please; only—I advise you not to go.

KATY

(Looks at him, then turns her face away quickly.)

I'm sure I won't catch cold, Doctor. A few steps around the corner—

DOCTOR

The very change of air, on a night like this—

KATY

(Laughingly.)

Do you really think me so delicate, Doctor?

DOCTOR

One can never tell, Katy.

KATY

Once I was out the whole night. The snow was knee-deep. Father drove us out—mother and myself—

DOCTOR

Is that possible?

KATY

And still—nothing happened. I had a cold in the head for a week, but that's all.

DOCTOR

What happened afterward?

KATY

Why, nothing.

DOCTOR

I mean—about your father—?

KATY

When he sobered up he became very loving. He bought mother a dress and me a pair of shoes. But a week later, he began all over again.

DOCTOR

And your mother?

KATY

She's accustomed to it. She loves him.

DOCTOR

Yes, of course. I might have known it. Love—who knows what love requires!

KATY

I hate love!

DOCTOR

What a curious remark from a girl of your age! But then—it really doesn't mean anything—

(Rises.)

KATY

Oh, yes, Doctor, it means a lot.

DOCTOR

(A few steps toward her.)

The moment you meet a man who attracts you, you are sure to shout: "Long live love!"

(KATY shakes her head.)

Certainly—"Long live love!"

KATY

Never!

DOCTOR

Unless —

*(She watches him intently.)**(Smiling.)*

Unless—you have been so terribly disappointed in the man you love—or used to love—

KATY

I've never loved, Doctor—or at least . . .

(Turns away.)

if I did love, the man never knew—could never know it.

DOCTOR

That's interesting. You must tell me about it some day. A doctor is something of a father confessor, you know.

KATY

I'd never bother you.

DOCTOR

(Going to desk and filling his glass.)

Don't you think that one who receives another's confessions experiences a certain amount of joy?

KATY

I don't know.

DOCTOR

Anyhow, I might be of service to you, perhaps.

KATY

Thank you.

(Remains silent for a moment, then turns and opens door a trifle.)

DOCTOR

Do moving pictures really interest you so much?

KATY

No.

DOCTOR

Well, then—?

KATY

Since you want it, I'll stay, Doctor.

DOCTOR

That's right. That's sensible. Very sensible. You're really an intelligent girl.

(Drinks.)

KATY

I'm not intelligent at all. I would never have thought of staying home. I'm only obeying you.

DOCTOR

That's a sign of intelligence, isn't it—to listen to reason?

KATY

Maybe. . . . Now I'll go up and—

(Makes a motion to go.)

DOCTOR

No, no—stay here. Keep me company a while. I'm lonesome to-night—I've had a very bad day. One patient died and another is dying. No doubt, they'll call me up later. . . . Oh, it's a dog's life, Katy—a dog's life, I tell you.

KATY

I always thought it was so wonderful to be a doctor.

DOCTOR

(Sadly.)

Wonderful. . . .

KATY

To be able to help those who suffer. To me a doctor is like a god—especially a doctor like you.

DOCTOR

(Smiling bitterly.)

A poor little god, indeed!

KATY

They say such fine things about you.

DOCTOR

Who?

KATY

Your patients. I hear them now and then.

DOCTOR

We always hear what we want to hear, Katy. I suppose the relatives of my patient who died to-day must

be saying: "He wouldn't have died if we'd had a different doctor. Weston is the worst doctor in creation!"

KATY

They have no right to say that. You can't cure everybody. People must die.

DOCTOR

Yes, of course. People must die—must die!

(Sighing.)

But let's not talk about that. Take your coat off and sit down.

(KATY does as she is told.)

(He lights a cigarette and watches her, pleased.)

I wonder how long he'll suffer—

KATY

Who?

DOCTOR

I told you—the patient that's dying.

KATY

Maybe he'll get better.

(Goes to lounge.)

DOCTOR

No it's not possible. He must die—just as if he were to be hanged or electrocuted—he must die!

KATY

(Seating herself.)

It's terrible! And would you have to go in such weather?

DOCTOR

(Rises.)

Don't you know a doctor can't choose the weather?

KATY

You may get sick yourself, while the man is dead anyhow, and you couldn't help him. That's not fair.

DOCTOR

What is fair in life, Katy? Your mother driven out in the snow? Your father beating you? My patient dying? What is fair?

(KATY does not answer.)

And to make things more unpleasant still, Mrs. Weston unable to return for a couple of weeks when I expected her to-morrow—

(Goes to window.)

KATY

You must be very lonesome without her.

DOCTOR

Yes, I am.

KATY

She's a wonderful woman.

DOCTOR

Yes.

KATY

Every one likes her.

DOCTOR

I'm not surprised to hear it. If it hadn't been for her, I would have gone mad long ago. I was very sensitive. I couldn't endure to see others suffer. A feverish hand transferred its heat to mine. If a man moaned, I had the hardest time not to moan myself—to scream. . . . A dying patient kept me awake for nights.

KATY

And they claim that doctors never feel.

DOCTOR

After a while, one does get hardened to it. But even to-day, after years and years of practice, I feel very nervous, upset, if things don't go just right. If a patient succumbs it seems almost my fault.

KATY

You can't cure everybody.

DOCTOR

That's it—not to be able to help those whose hope you are! They stretch their arms out to you—implore you. You take your hat and say seriously, pompously: "Be sure to follow my instructions!" knowing very well that it is absolutely useless.

(Sighs deeply.)

But then, it depends, no doubt, upon the temperament of the person. I should not have been a physician.

(Sits in wing-chair.)

KATY

But you should be, because you sympathize with people.

DOCTOR

Perhaps. I don't know. When a man reaches forty-two, Katy, he begins to doubt everything. He always regrets the road he has taken. But any road he would have taken would have led him finally to regret. . . . But let's not talk about that.

(Rises.)

I think you would have enjoyed yourself better at the theater. I am in such a mood!

(Walking toward window.)

Perhaps you ought to go anyhow. It's not too late; and after all, a little rain for a strong little girl like you. . . .

KATY

I like it here. I like to hear you talk, but if you order me to go—I—

(Rises.)

DOCTOR

(Turning to her.)

There is no ordering to-night. We are two human beings—two very tiny human beings, absolutely equal. Indeed, for that matter, we are always equal.

KATY

No. You're a doctor. I am only a—

DOCTOR

We are always equal, Katy. Not in the sense politicians talk of equality, but really, profoundly equal.

(*Silence.*)

(KATY *sits.*)

The strangest thing I know of is the way man classifies people—the way he discovered the measuring-rod, the scale—the assurance that he has—as though he were weighing dead fish, or measuring a yard of cloth.

KATY

I find a great difference between one person and another, Doctor.

DOCTOR

True, there is a difference. You being half my age are by that very fact superior to me, although I am a doctor—even a good doctor, as you say.

KATY

Oh, no, Doctor, don't say that!

DOCTOR

It's so! What are honors, wealth, everything compared to youth? Nothing! You don't know it. You can't realize it. When you reach forty you will know what you have lost, being no longer twenty.

KATY

I'd rather be forty, famous and educated than be twenty and a foolish girl like myself.

DOCTOR

(Laughing.)

That's it! That's what I've been trying to tell you. People have a strange notion about what is superior and inferior. You know, in all ages and in all countries, I believe, the shoemaker was considered lower, say, than the hat-maker or the coat-maker.

KATY

The shoemaker—?

DOCTOR

You don't understand me.

KATY

No, Doctor.

DOCTOR

(Sits on edge of desk.)

Because shoes are worn on the feet which are below the chest or the head. Therefore, he who makes them must be below the man who makes hats or coats. People judge by position, you see—up, down—therefore, superior, inferior. But up and down is false! It's only an illusion. It doesn't exist!

(Silence.)

If there is a difference between one person and another, it has quite another basis—a real one. You, for

instance, are—worth a good deal more than a middle-aged queen, and this difference—

KATY

Oh, I'm worth nothing, Doctor, nothing at all. And now, more than ever, I feel how worthless I am—how—

DOCTOR

Why?

KATY

I wish I were educated. I wish I were a lady—like Mrs. Weston—that I might understand you. I wish I—

DOCTOR

(Going to her.)

Foolish little girl! Only the old and homely need education. This was said thousands of years ago by a very wise man. It is still true. It will always be true.

KATY

But I am homely.

DOCTOR

(Laughing.)

With your fresh cheeks, your blue eyes, your fine lips, your—

KATY

(Covering her face.)

No, no, Doctor. Please!

DOCTOR

Do you think a middle-aged queen would be loath to hear such things—I mean not as compliments, but as

real truths? Oh, foolish little Katy, who wants to be educated although she is young and pretty!

(Walks up and down for a few moments, looks out of the window.)

It will rain the whole night—and to-morrow, too. . . . It's a good thing Mrs. Weston isn't coming home to-morrow.

KATY

(Absent-mindedly.)

Yes.

DOCTOR

She's very susceptible to the weather, you know. It worries me. She's been overtaxing herself. She will not realize she is growing older. Oh, well, one will never accept the idea of losing youth.

KATY

Mrs. Weston is always cheerful.

DOCTOR

You aren't cheerful, but you are young. Cheerfulness is not the only sign of youth. Old people are frequently more cheerful, just as sick people are frequently more hopeful.

(Silence.)

Yes, there is only one difference between people—age. When some one is mentioned, what is the first question asked? "Is he or she young or middle-aged or old," isn't it?

KATY

Yes, Doctor, but at forty-two a man is really young.

DOCTOR

(Smiling.)

Yes, he is young, so it seems. Perhaps he really is.

(Silence: he drinks, then walks over to the window and plays a tune upon the pane.)

Do you like the rain, Katy?

KATY

(Too seriously.)

I like it if I'm inside of the house.

DOCTOR

(Turns to her: laughingly.)

That's right. After all, that's the only way we judge things.

KATY

It's good for the crops.

DOCTOR

Yes, of course.

KATY

Nothing would grow without rain. Flowers would wither and we'd starve.

DOCTOR

It's strange. You're saying what even the youngest child knows, and yet it seems quite new.

KATY

(Encouraged.)

Everything is good in its season.

DOCTOR

(Approaching her.)

That's very true. Do you see? Unconsciously you come back to age. Season for the ground is a sort of age, isn't it? In the winter you may call the ground old as in the spring you may call it young. And it depends upon the season whether certain things are good or bad.

KATY

Yes.

(Silence.)

DOCTOR

(Sits on arm of lounge beside her.)

Is your father young?

KATY

Fifty years old.

DOCTOR

And your mother?

KATY

Forty-five.

DOCTOR

Did he always drink?

KATY

Always.

DOCTOR

And nevertheless your mother—

KATY

Loves him—

(Their eyes meet for a moment, then KATY turns her head away.)

I guess I'd better go now. . . .

DOCTOR

(Rising.)

Where?

KATY

To my room. I've bothered you long enough.

DOCTOR

Bothered me? How can you say that? I've been lonesome and you've kept me company. I've been sad and you cheered me up.

KATY

I shouldn't have taken up your time, Doctor.

DOCTOR

Please remain a little longer.

(Going toward the desk, troubled.)

I'm waiting for the call from the dying man's family. I'm too nervous to do any work.

(Turning to her.)

You've no idea how very pleasing your company is to me.

KATY

I'm afraid—I—

DOCTOR

(Clapping his hands and crossing to her.)

I have an idea! Katy, a very fine idea!

(She looks at him, not understanding.)

We are not dead! We are not dying! Are we, Katy?

(She shakes her head.)

We are alive! Alive! To-morrow we may be dead, Katy! Do you understand?

(She nods.)

And we are young, Katy, young! At least you said that I was young. You said that at forty-two a man is young, didn't you say that?

KATY

Yes, Doctor, you are young.

DOCTOR

(Touching her shoulders.)

Of course, Katy, of course. Life is held by a thread. A wind blows and the thread is torn. So let us drink to-night, you and I—Katy, before the evil wind blows—

KATY

No, no, Doctor—

DOCTOR

Why not?

KATY

I never drank, Doctor; and besides—Mrs. Weston—

DOCTOR

Why, there's nothing wrong. It was raining, a patient was dying—I was waiting—I was lonesome and I drank some wine, that's all.

KATY

Yes, but I drank it with you.

DOCTOR

What of it?

KATY

She wouldn't like it. She'll tell you that you might have called up some friend—some one—your equal.

DOCTOR

(Laughing.)

My equal! Indeed, you're not my equal—you're twenty years younger. You—

(Touching her chin, playfully.)

Why, it makes almost a romance.

KATY

(Turning away from him.)

Mrs. Weston will not like it—I feel it. . . .

DOCTOR

(Following her up.)

Listen! We won't tell her! How about it? We'll have a little secret all to ourselves, eh? What do you say?

KATY

No, Doctor—I'm afraid—

DOCTOR

Of having a little secret—such as a little drink together? What is more agreeable than a beautiful little secret? Later on, whenever you hear my patients speak of me, you will think: “Oh, I know Dr. Weston better than all of you!” or when I shall order you about—

KATY

You never do—

DOCTOR

But supposing I should; you'll think: “Hold on there, Sir Doctor! We have a little secret together! Don't you remember we drank together one night—while it rained?”

(KATY *laughs lightly*.)

And I will bow profoundly: “My dear Miss Katy, I beg your pardon—a thousand pardons! You kept me company when I was lonesome and sad. Your youth rejoiced me. We were two tiny human beings.” Of course, I shall not say all this—I shall think it. You will see it in my eyes. You will understand, won't you?

KATY

Yes, Doctor.

DOCTOR

Why, my dear girl, if people had such little secrets in common, they could not be as cruel to one another

as they are at present. If they could say: "With such and such I dined—with such and such I laughed or wept—"

(Goes to desk.)

Oh, there's only one glass.

(Starts for door RIGHT.)

KATY

Let me—

DOCTOR

No, no—I'll get it.

(EXITS.)

(KATY is in a quandary as to what to do. She goes to chair upon which she had deposited her rain-coat and umbrella and is about to take them up.)

DOCTOR

(Off.)

Here we are!

(KATY recovers herself as DOCTOR returns with a glass.)

(He fills the glasses.)

DOCTOR

Now for the first glass of wine together. Raise high your glass!

(She raises her glass.)

To—

(Thinks for a long moment.)

To the rain—the beautiful rain!

(Drinks his glass in one gulp.)

(KATY sips hers slowly.)

No, no, my dear. The first glass you must drink to the bottom and at once.

(She gulps it down.)

It's good, isn't it?

(She nods.)

(Refilling glasses.)

The ancients used to say, "In wine there is truth!" But I say, "In wine there is beauty!"

(Raising his glass.)

Drink!

KATY

I'm afraid—

DOCTOR

(Laughing.)

Afraid of a tiny glass—an innocent little glass—balancing itself on a long, thin leg—like a stork before it rains? You said you liked the rain, because we are inside; but you have no idea how beautiful the rain is after a few glasses of wine. The windowpane becomes a harp with golden strings, a beautiful lady playing upon it—

KATY

I—I—

DOCTOR

And you cannot imagine what wonderful music she plays! She plays the song of eternity, the song which tells you: "You will never, never die! The day after to-morrow will never, never come!" She plays the song of eternal youth—of eternal love—

KATY

It's too beautiful—

DOCTOR

Ah, do you see? Do you see? We are alive, Katy! Others are dead and dying. But we two—we are alive!

(KATY *laughs and drinks.*)

Aren't you beginning to hear the beautiful music of the lady that's playing the harp?

(KATY *nods.*)

(*She seats herself in wing-chair.*)

(DOCTOR *sits on edge of desk, and takes out cigarette case.*)

A cigarette, my dear?

(KATY *shakes her head.*)

You've never tried one?

KATY

No.

DOCTOR

Try it now. Go ahead! In honor of the rain and the vine.

KATY

(Giggling.)

Give me yours.

DOCTOR

(Lights cigarette; places it between her lips.)

You're a sport! You're a great little sport!

(Looking at her very closely.)

KATY

(Coughing.)

And you—you're a great little doctor!

(They laugh loudly.)

DOCTOR

No, no, don't blow out. Draw in. That's it! How quickly you learn things! You are very intelligent.

(They sip more wine.)

KATY

I'm not intelligent, I'm really foolish, Doctor.

DOCTOR

Don't call me doctor, Katy. Aren't we equal tonight?

(KATY nods.)

Raise your glass high! I drink to my pretty lady, and you drink to your old John!

KATY

To my young John—to my very young John!

(They drink.)

(Silence.)

DOCTOR

Listen, dear, to the beautiful lady playing the harp.

KATY

She plays it beautifully.

DOCTOR

Do you know who she is, Katy?

KATY

Who?

DOCTOR

(Bending amorously toward her.)

Don't you really know who she is?

KATY

No—John—

DOCTOR

She has blue eyes like the sea; fresh cheeks like autumn apples; a mouth like—

(KATY turns her face.)

Ah, you little rascal—you guessed who the beautiful lady is, didn't you?

KATY

(Her face still turned.)

No!

DOCTOR

It's a marvellous song—the strings are all gold-red—
—new gold—

KATY

But the song is bad because she can't play well. Her hand is not beautiful. She's not a beautiful lady.

DOCTOR

(Leaning very close to her.)

I say she's the most beautiful lady in the world!

(Tries to put his arm about her shoulders.)

(KATY coquettishly avoids his embrace, and runs, laughing, to the lounge.)

(DOCTOR follows her, spilling wine from his glass.)

KATY

Oh! . . .

(Placing bottle on Davenport table: laughing.)

DOCTOR

It's a good sign, Katy, a good sign! When wine spills it's a sign of joy and cheer. The Italians call it "Allegria." Beautiful word, isn't it, Katy?

KATY

Yes.

DOCTOR

Say it.

KATY

Al-al-ale-lia.

(They laugh.)

Oh—I'll bring a rag to wipe the carpet.

*(Places her glass on table and starts for door
RIGHT.)*

DOCTOR

(Prevents her from going.)

What! My harpist, my wonderful lady, wipe the carpet?

KATY

Madam will be angry.

DOCTOR

*(Drawing her back to lounge. He sits. She
kneels on lounge beside him.)*

(He fills glasses.)

What madam? Come, let's drink again to the harpist—to the beauti—to the harpist—and her harp—

(They drink.)

KATY

Where is her harp?

DOCTOR

Here—my heart.

*(KATY puts glass down and makes motion of
playing the harp on DOCTOR'S heart.)*

KATY

(Strumming.)

Tra-la-la-la-la-la-la-la-la-la—

DOCTOR

You play the strings and I shall sing, since I am the harp.

(They laugh.)

DOCTOR

Tra-la-la-la-la-la.

(KATY strums. She becomes so imbued with the spirit of the game that she creeps closer and closer to him, laughing gaily until their faces almost meet.)

(DOCTOR stops singing suddenly, his eyes meeting hers.)

(She stops strumming.)

(KATY tears herself from his look and rises.)

KATY

Oh, John! John—!

DOCTOR

(Grasps her arm and pulls her back beside him.)
My little Katy!

KATY

I'm afraid—I—

DOCTOR

Of whom?

KATY

Of the lady—far away—you know—

DOCTOR

What lady?

KATY

You forget. . . .

DOCTOR

I've forgotten everything. I remember nothing! Nothing, except my beautiful harpist!

(Pressing her to his chest.)

KATY

John—you are so wonderful!

DOCTOR

My dear, dear Katy.

KATY

John, I told you I loved someone—you remember?

DOCTOR

Yes—yes—

KATY

Someone who didn't know it—who could never know it—?

DOCTOR

Yes—

KATY

It's you! you!

(DOCTOR looks at her intently without making any remark.)

From the very first day I came here—I had always hated men; but you—you—I loved from the very first!

(She kneels before him and takes his face between her hands.)

(Silence.)

(Rises suddenly.)

Give me another glass! You see I can drink! It's my father in me!

DOCTOR

(Rises, goes around to table.) (Filling glasses.)
He had to drink, Katy. He had to drink.

KATY

He was never cruel—only when he drank. . . .

DOCTOR

(Giving her a glass.)

He had to drink—he had to—because he heard the wind that tears the thread—

KATY

(Raises her glass to him.)

(They drink.)

I never dreamed that wine could taste so nice—

DOCTOR

It isn't the wine, Katy. It's love!

(Refills glasses.)

KATY

(Raising her glass high.)

Then . . . long live love! Long live love!

DOCTOR

Long live love!

(They drink.)

KATY

(With sudden realization.)

But I'm not a lady. The real beautiful lady is far away.

DOCTOR

No, the beautiful lady is here!

KATY

(Turning from him and going to wing-chair.)

To-morrow I'm again the maid.

DOCTOR

To-morrow we must surely die! I'm going to put a sign over the door of my office—"To-morrow we surely die!" What do you think of the idea?

KATY

If we only died to-morrow!

DOCTOR

Poor little one!

KATY

Poor little doctor! He, he, he, he!

DOCTOR

That's right, laugh! Laugh! Ha, ha, ha, ha!

KATY

Why are you laughing?

DOCTOR

Because we are alive! Alive! Because we can drink—
and forget!

(Refills the glasses.)

KATY

Ha, ha, ha, ha!

DOCTOR

Why are you laughing?

KATY

I don't know—I don't know—

DOCTOR

I know! You are laughing because you are blind.
People laugh because they are blind.

KATY

(Drinking.)

I don't understand.

DOCTOR

(In mock, lugubrious fashion.)

The Nameless One—hides in the corner—a thin
candle in his fist—his cheeks puffed with his breath.

Soon—soon—he blows! (*Sings Chopin's funeral march.*) Tra-lal-la-la-la-la-la!

KATY

He, he, he, he!

DOCTOR

(*In mock anger.*)

Why do you laugh?

KATY

(*Imitating him.*)

The Nameless One puffed his cheeks. . . . I'm drunk—drunk. . . .

DOCTOR

Ha, ha, ha, ha! She's drunk! Drunk with the nectar of the gods!

(*Fills the glasses.*)

Drink! Ha, ha, ha, ha!

KATY

John! John! I want to dance! I want to dance!

DOCTOR

Good! Good!

(*KATY rises, dances toward the desk and places her glass upon it. She continues to dance.*)

Dance! Dance!

(*Goes to phonograph and turns on a wild pulsating tune.*)

Daughter of King Herod! Salomé wants to dance!
Good! Dance on, young maiden!

(The storm has been rising for some time with intermittent flashes of lightning and crashes of thunder.)

(KATY dances with greater and greater abandon—a disjointed, lascivious dance. Her waist opens, her hair is disheveled.)

(DOCTOR tries to catch her in his arms. She avoids him, laughing merrily, triumphantly.)

(This game lasts for a few minutes. DOCTOR finally catches her.)

DOCTOR

I've got you, you little rascal!

KATY

John, I love you—I love you!

(The telephone rings. The storm rises.)

DOCTOR

Your lips!

(Telephone continues to ring.)

KATY

I love you! I love you!

DOCTOR

Your lips! Give me your lips!

KATY

John! You're mine—always!

(DOCTOR dimly aware of the ringing, raises his head.)

(The phonograph continues its wild music. The lightning and thunder have reached their maximum. The rain beats against the window-pane.)

DOCTOR

What's that?

KATY

What?

DOCTOR

That noise. . . . The telephone! Listen! Listen!

KATY

(Looking at the telephone.)

He, he, he, he! The telephone is ringing. I can dance to that!

(Dances unsteadily to the desk.)

DOCTOR

Who can it be!

KATY

(Removing receiver and shouting into phone.)

What's that? Who? He? He's dead? Dead? He, he, he, he!

(To the DOCTOR.)

Listen! Listen! He's dead! Dead!

DOCTOR

(Moving unsteadily toward lounge, sinks upon it, and stares before him.)

Dead! Dead!

(KATY looks at him for a moment, then going quickly to him.)

KATY

But we're not dead!

(Jumping on lounge upon her knees, grasps his face between her hands.)

(Gaily—triumphantly.)

We are not dead! We are alive, John! Alive! Alive!

DOCTOR

Alive!

(They kiss passionately.)

CURTAIN.

ACT II

SCENE: *The same.*

TIME: *Six years later. Evening.*

AT RISE: *A few changes in the arrangement of the room to indicate the passage of time.*

NURSE *is discovered at desk, busying herself with appointment book. On lounge, the WOMAN.*

WOMAN

(Consulting her watch.)

How much longer will he be in there?

NURSE

I can't say. It certainly won't be long.

WOMAN

He's been there exactly nine minutes. . . . What time have you?

NURSE

(Examining her watch.)

Just eight o'clock.

WOMAN

You're one minute fast—yes, exactly one minute. Doctor's hours are from six to eight. How can he see me?

NURSE

He'll see you, I'm sure.

WOMAN

I was here in plenty time. I live by the clock. I set my watch twice a day.

(NURSE *smiles.*)

Do you believe in palmists?

NURSE

No, I don't.

WOMAN

They are wonderful. I visit a palmist twice a month. They can tell you everything. Everything is written in the hand, you know. No doubt about that.

(*Enter MAN from Doctor's office.*)

MAN

Good-bye, Doctor.

WOMAN

(*Continuing.*)

Only last month I—

NURSE

(*To WOMAN.*)

Will you go in, please?

(*Opens door for WOMAN. The latter quickly swishes into office.*)

(*MAN eyes WOMAN critically as she whisks by him.*)

(*NURSE closes office doors.*)

MAN

(Searching around for something.)

I had a hat.

NURSE

I think this is it.

(Hands him his hat which he left upon a chair.)

MAN

Oh—thanks.

*(Doorbell rings.)**(MAN tries to light his pipe.)**(NURSE returns, preceded by KATY.)*

NURSE

Doctor's hours are from six to eight, Miss.

KATY

It's all right—it's a social call.

(MAN looks at her slyly.)

MAN

Well, I'll be off. . . . I won't be coming here much more now.

(KATY goes up above the lounge waiting impatiently for MAN to leave.)

NURSE

I'm glad you're better.

MAN

I'm not better. In fact, I've only a few months to live.

NURSE

You've been saying that for years. You're looking fine.

MAN

That's what you say. But I know. . . . When a doctor tries to amuse you by telling you jokes, it's to keep your mind off the truth. The doctor just told me a funny story.

(Turns to go, but hesitates.)

Don't forget the package, Miss.

NURSE

I shan't.

MAN

It's real Turkish tobacco.

(Exits.)

NURSE

Won't you sit down, Miss?

(KATY sits down.)

(Re-enter WOMAN followed by DOCTOR.)

WOMAN

I so dread these cold nights. They're so—so—cold, you know.

DOCTOR

Just follow instructions. It's nothing to be concerned about.

(Opening the hall door for her.)

Good-night.

WOMAN

Good-night, Doctor.

NURSE

May I go now, Doctor?

DOCTOR

If there is no one else—

(Is taken aback by KATY's presence. Then carefully he tries to hide his consternation.)

Yes—you had better go.

NURSE

Here's the usual present, Doctor, from the man who just left.

(DOCTOR nods.)

(NURSE goes out door RIGHT.)

DOCTOR

(Turning to KATY.)

Why did you come here?

KATY

(Rising.)

I had to see you.

DOCTOR

You know the risk—

KATY

Oh, don't fear—

DOCTOR

My wife is home.

KATY

She never comes to this room during your office hours
—I know that.

DOCTOR

But it's after hours—

KATY

I didn't want to interfere with your work.

DOCTOR

What do you want?

KATY

I want to see you, John. You never come to see me.

DOCTOR

I'm busy, you know that.

KATY

John, why do you treat me so?

(NURSE *re-enters.*)

(DOCTOR *checks himself as he is about to say something.*)

NURSE

Good-night, Doctor.

DOCTOR

Good-night.

(NURSE *exits.*)

(Turning to KATY.)

Please go away.

(Looking apprehensively toward door RIGHT.)

KATY

I must have a talk with you.

DOCTOR

I have no time.

KATY

If I were a patient, you'd have time, wouldn't you?

DOCTOR

But you're not a patient.

KATY

I almost wish I were. You're kind and generous toward every one but me.

DOCTOR

If I'm not mistaken, I'm supporting you, am I not?

KATY

Yes, of course. I wasn't thinking of that. But since you mentioned it, how do you support me?

DOCTOR

How?

KATY

Yes—how?

DOCTOR

Very well, I'm sure.

KATY

I saw your wife the other day. She is dressed like a queen. Of course, she's a lady. I'm nothing at all to you, am I?

DOCTOR

She's my wife.

(KATY *laughs.*)

(*Angrily.*)

Why are you laughing?

KATY

I laugh because—although she's a lady and she dresses well and she is your wife, she is—old!

(DOCTOR *tries to make a reply but does not succeed.*)

(*Triumphantly.*)

I saw her. I hadn't seen her for a few years. She is old!

DOCTOR

She is not old. She is beautiful.

KATY

A beautiful old lady! Her face is getting yellowish! She has deep crows' feet! She is forty-five—I am twenty-six and I look five years younger.

(*Emphatically.*)

The only difference between people—is—their age. All other differences are artificial and ridiculous.

DOCTOR

It's not true. There are dozens of differences between one person and another.

KATY

There is only one. You once said so yourself.

DOCTOR

Will you forever and ever remind me of that terrible night—of that insane night?

KATY

You call it a terrible night and an insane night, but in your heart of hearts you know that it was the most wonderful night of your life—the most beautiful.

DOCTOR

The most unfortunate night.

KATY

It's not true, John. You don't mean that. You can't mean it. You know that you were sad—that your heart was old. You were very lonesome and could think of nothing but death. I gave you life! I gave you youth! I made you happy. I made you young! Young!

DOCTOR

A false youth!

KATY

A beautiful youth, John! You forget! You pretend to forget! A beautiful youth!

DOCTOR

I've been suffering the consequences of that beautiful youth for six years. It's enough, I tell you, it's enough!

KATY

What do you mean it's enough?

DOCTOR

It's quite enough.

KATY

What's enough? What do you mean?

DOCTOR

(Looking at her long, then hopelessly.)

I don't know—

KATY

I know what you mean, John. You're tired of giving me the little money you've been allowing me.

DOCTOR

No.

KATY

Yes! Yes! You let me dress like a servant.

(Angered.)

I know how to dress just as well as your wife, but I haven't the money.

DOCTOR

I'm giving you all I can afford.

KATY

It's not true, John! Your wife can dress—

DOCTOR

Don't mention her!

KATY

I'm more important than she!

DOCTOR

(Laughing bitterly, then suddenly serious.)

I'm not at all in the mood for jesting—do you understand, Katy?

KATY

I'm not jesting.

DOCTOR

Then you are—

KATY

What am I? What am I? Go on, tell me what I am!

DOCTOR

You are impertinent!

KATY

John, be careful! Be careful!

DOCTOR

Are you threatening me?

KATY

Be careful!

(A moment's silence while she walks over to the window and returns.)

I am superior to her, I say. I am more important! I am the mother of your child. Do you understand? She has no children.

DOCTOR

That makes no difference. She is my wife.

KATY

It makes all the difference in the world. Everybody would agree with me. She is your wife, but she has no children. I have a child. What is a childless woman?

DOCTOR

That's my fault.

KATY

(Laughing.)

Your fault.

DOCTOR

My fault! My fault!

KATY

Your fault! One might think that you couldn't have children. One might suspect—he, he, he, he!

(Lasciviously.)

But I know better, John—I know better!

DOCTOR

I never wanted children.

KATY

She couldn't have any. She is barren! She is barren! She is a tree that can bear no fruit. She—

DOCTOR

We didn't need any children. We loved each other.

(KATY *laughs.*)

We didn't need any children. Do you understand?

(KATY *continues to laugh.*)

(*Striking the desk with his fist.*)

Stop laughing!

(*A sudden silence. They look at each other steadily.*)

(DOCTOR *takes a wallet from his pocket, tosses it on the desk and starts for the door RIGHT.*)

KATY

(*Gently.*)

Wait!—

DOCTOR

I—

KATY

I'd like you to see my boy. Won't you come and see him?

DOCTOR

I don't want to see him.

KATY

You never want to see him.

DOCTOR

I don't care for children of his age.

KATY

It's not true. I remember the way you used to treat your little patients.

DOCTOR

Oh, sick children—that's different.

KATY

No, not because they were sick—because your heart is tender. Even when they weren't sick—when they just accompanied their mothers here.

DOCTOR

I have changed since.

KATY

People don't change that way.

DOCTOR

(Going to her. Firmly.)

I don't like your son—that's the truth of the matter.

KATY

Your son, my dear Doctor.

DOCTOR

My son, if you will. I don't like him.

KATY

It's not natural.

DOCTOR

It's true, nevertheless.

KATY

He loves you.

DOCTOR

Me? Does he—know—?

KATY

Oh, no, don't worry! He doesn't know. He simply loves his father.

DOCTOR

Oh—

KATY

You permit him to love his father, don't you?

DOCTOR

(Crossing to lounge.)

I am not interested.

(Sitting down.)

KATY

I told him that his father—is alive—perhaps.

DOCTOR

It was understood that you would tell him—that I—that—his father—is dead.

KATY

Of course, it was understood. But he longed to have a father. He couldn't console himself that he didn't have any. He was always talking about other children's fathers. I really do think that he loves his father whom he has never seen more than his mother.

DOCTOR

And so you—told him—

KATY

In order to console him; I told him that his father was a sailor—that he was lost somewhere on an island—that perhaps he is still alive and maybe—maybe some day he'd come back.

DOCTOR

Oh—

KATY

Now he wants to become a sailor—nothing but a sailor. He looks at the maps. He is so cute, John. He looks at them with a magnifying glass. He wants to discover the tiniest island, where he intends to sail and bring back his father.

DOCTOR

Tomfoolery!

KATY

Why tomfoolery? . . . You're trying to be cruel. It doesn't become you.

DOCTOR

It's you that's cruel.

KATY

I?

DOCTOR

Yes, telling him—

KATY

What else could I tell a child whose father wouldn't acknowledge him?

DOCTOR

Don't begin that way.

KATY

What way?

DOCTOR

That cheap melodrama way.

KATY

It's not a cheap melodrama way. You forget that I am his mother.

DOCTOR

I don't forget. You remind me of that every time I see you.

(Rises and crosses to desk.)

KATY

I'm proud of it! I'm not like other women, John. I don't complain that you seduced me. I am proud to be the mother of your son!

DOCTOR

My son! I never wanted him. If you hadn't kept your condition a secret, it would never have come to this.

KATY

You dare tell me that, John! You—a respectable physician—the well-known, the good Dr. Weston!

DOCTOR

It has nothing to do with respectability. It is being done every day. Civilized people needn't have children if they don't want to.

(KATY *laughs*.)

If people understood the tragedy of life—the meaning of birth and death—they would all . . .

(KATY *laughs nervously*.)

What makes you laugh? If you only saw what I see—every day—fifty times a day—you wouldn't laugh.

KATY

I'm laughing—because you're saying this simply to prove that your wife—that she might have had a child had she wanted to.

DOCTOR

Of course.

KATY

If she could have had a child by you, mind you, do you mean to tell me that she would ever have agreed not to?

(DOCTOR *takes a few steps toward her, stops, and with a gesture of despair starts toward door RIGHT*.)

KATY

Just a little while longer. I must talk to you—I must explain something. . . .

DOCTOR

What?

KATY

I don't know as yet—I am not sure. Sit down, please.

(Seats herself on lounge.)

(DOCTOR sits in wing-chair.)

(Silence.)

DOCTOR

(Half to himself.)

I'm sorry—very sorry—

KATY

Why are you sorry?

DOCTOR

I'm sorry that I didn't have any children with my wife.

KATY

(Triumphantly.)

See! See!

DOCTOR

Your son has brought me misery. Her son would have brought me joy.

KATY

(Rising angrily.)

Stop talking about her son! My son is wonderful. You don't care to know him, but he is wonderful. He looks just like you. Every day he gets to look more and more as you must have looked when you were a child. He is

beautiful. He is intelligent. He is polite. A little prince! Your wife's child could never have been half as wonderful as he!

DOCTOR

He has spoiled my peace of mind. He has made a liar and a coward of me. He has destroyed my happiness. My life was a perfect symphony—a harmonious piece of music. You came, and the music changed into an infernal noise.

KATY

(Seating herself on the lounge.)

Oh—

DOCTOR

I could keep my head high. I could look the world straight in the face. Now I dare not face any one. I am leading a double life. To my wife I claimed it was wrong to bring other human beings into the world, but with another woman I have a child. My wife I deprived of motherhood.

KATY

(Laughing ironically.)

You persist in thinking me the same foolish, ignorant girl that I was six years ago. You never want to see the difference between then and now. I am a woman now, John. I've learned. I've grown.

(Silence.)

Oh, why—why—should I love you? Just you? Why should I hate everybody else—everybody, do you hear? Why should I have been faithful to you—when you—

DOCTOR

I never asked you to be faithful to me.

KATY

I know it. You wanted nothing better than that I should betray you.

DOCTOR

In what way could you betray me?

KATY

(*Bitterly.*)

I cannot even betray you! A woman like me—not even betray you! You would have been so happy had I become a street woman, wouldn't you, John?

DOCTOR

Oh, let's not—

KATY

Oh, yes, I know it. That would have relieved you of all obligations.

DOCTOR

I never meant to stop supporting you.

KATY

I'm not thinking of money. I'm thinking of moral obligations. You would have thought: "She was only a woman of the streets, after all—a woman any man could have. I had her first—one night when I drank too much. But that was only by mere chance. With a woman like her even the purest wife, the most perfect lady could

not be too angry. It's neither moral nor immoral. A man alone—a little need—a trifle—”

DOCTOR

Please—

KATY

But with a woman who remains faithful for six years—who bears you a child—when your own wife, although a perfect lady, is barren, ah, that's a different thing, isn't it, Doctor?

DOCTOR

How you can torture me!

KATY

(Laughing bitterly.)

Poor little John!

DOCTOR

I'm your laughing-stock. I deserve it.

KATY

Oh, no, no! Forgive me, dear, forgive me!

DOCTOR

We crush each other's hearts.

KATY

Yes.

DOCTOR

We don't understand each other.

KATY

No, John.

DOCTOR

You think me cruel—narrow-minded.

KATY

No, dear, no.

DOCTOR

Yes, yes. You cannot help it. It seems so to you. But it's because I'm living a lie, a constant lie. But more than that—more terrible than that—I cannot even love.

KATY

What do you mean, John?

DOCTOR

You love only me. You never loved another. You cannot understand the horrible sensation when kissing the lips of one to feel the lips of another mingle with them.

KATY

(Joyfully.)

You feel my lips—mingle?

DOCTOR

Yes, you interpose your face between my face and hers and then it's neither you nor she I kiss, but the air—the empty air. You cannot imagine the meaning of emptiness.

(Seating himself in the wing-chair.)

KATY

You—feel—my lips?

DOCTOR

Emptiness. . . .

(Silence.)

KATY

(Going over to him.)

Had you only come to me once in a while—as a lover—I would have been so happy! I didn't mind that you loved your wife, that you even loved her more than you loved me—provided you showed me a little love, too—

DOCTOR

I can't.

KATY

Never?

DOCTOR

Never!

KATY

John!

(Covering his face with his hands.)

John, I love you—and you can never—never—love me!

*(Silence.)**(She turns away from him, sobbing quietly.)*

DOCTOR

*(Seems to hear footsteps; looks apprehensively toward door.)**(Walks over to KATY; kindly.)*

Come, you must go now. You've stayed here much too long. I have an important hospital case.

KATY

No, John, that's not true. You gave up hospital work long ago.

DOCTOR

You got me so accustomed to lying—

KATY

That will end to-day.

DOCTOR

What will end to-day?

KATY

How glad you seem!

DOCTOR

Come, please!

KATY

Sit down.

DOCTOR

I can listen standing.

KATY

Sit down, please.

(He seats himself in the wing-chair.)

How glad you seem, John!

DOCTOR

If it's just for that—

KATY

What were you thinking, John?

DOCTOR

I wasn't thinking at all. I haven't had time to think.

KATY

In one second you can think a thousand thoughts. They say those who are about to drown can see their whole life pass before them in just a few seconds.

DOCTOR

I thought nothing, I tell you!

KATY

Oh, yes, yes, a moment ago you thought many things. When I told you that all will end to-day, you thought: "She's going to leave me—or she's going to get married. There are so many ways of getting rid of her. She might leave the country—say that her husband was a sailor or a miner. . . ."

(Opens her hand bag and produces a revolver.)

See, John, I've had this for over a year.

(He flinches at the sight of it.)

Oh, don't fear, it wasn't meant for you. I just wanted you to know what terrible thoughts I had. It would have been so easy to use it if it hadn't been for my boy. . . . I know what you're thinking now, John. "Perhaps she'll kill herself after all! Oh, how good that would be!"

DOCTOR

(Disgusted.)

Oh!

KATY

You're thinking, "At last I shall have peace of mind! At last I shall be able to kiss my wife—my elderly wife—"

DOCTOR

Oh—

KATY

"Kiss her without any feeling of shame or remorse—and the lips of the other one shall not mingle any more. At last I shall be able to face the world. I am not leading a double life, ladies and gentlemen. I am not lying every minute of my life. I am just—Dr. John Weston!" You thought all this without realizing that you thought it. I saw it in your eyes—I saw it in your face. You were dazzling! You looked as you did that night, John!

(Seats herself on the lounge.)

(Silence.)

Listen, John! For six long years I have been suffering as you can't imagine. But these years would have been nothing—would have been less than a day—had it been only for you.

(He looks up, questioningly.)

Why have I suffered? Why? Was it to spare you pain? No! It was to—to spare her! I have suffered for her!

DOCTOR

What do you mean?

KATY

I haven't spared you any pain, have I? I've spared her all the pain! She has been perfectly happy, as though nothing had ever happened between us two.

DOCTOR

She is innocent, isn't she?

KATY

It's not a question of innocence. It's a question of pain. I can't endure it any longer! And to-day it became clear to me that I have suffered only to make her happy!

DOCTOR

We have agreed to spare her, haven't we?

KATY

(Rising.)

I don't care what we agreed upon. All our agreements are broken from this moment on! Six years of any agreement is long enough. Everything changes in six years. You've changed—I've changed. She has become already old!

DOCTOR

(Rises.)

Leave her out of this!

KATY

On the contrary, she is the one that will no longer be left out.

DOCTOR

What do you intend to do?

KATY

From now on it's her turn to suffer—for me! Do you understand, John?

DOCTOR

No, no,—Katy!

KATY

And we shall see if she'll be as patient as I've been.

DOCTOR

Katy!

KATY

(Breathing deeply.)

At last! At last! I feel as though the chains—heavy, iron chains have been loosened from my hands and feet. I feel free! Free! It's her turn now! Her turn!

DOCTOR

What do you mean?

KATY

(Firmly.)

Listen! From now on, I want my son to have a father, do you hear? You will divorce your wife and marry me.

DOCTOR

You're crazy!

KATY

No, I'm not crazy. My child must have a father. He is the son of Dr. John Weston. Everybody shall know it.

DOCTOR

You are insane!

KATY

He is handicapped by his lack of a father. He does not realize it as yet, but he will.

DOCTOR

I'll see to it that his future is assured.

KATY

It's not the same. I want him to have courage, confidence, hope; I want him to be able to undertake anything. Is that unreasonable?

DOCTOR

Under the circumstances—

KATY

That's what I'm saying. Circumstances must change! Indeed, they have already changed. Women are young for a very short period but they are old for a long time. I won't take any chances. I have decided, John! I must have you!

DOCTOR

It's absurd, Katy!

KATY

(Not paying any attention.)

She—the former Mrs. Weston—well, we shall be kind to her. I don't mean that you should neglect her entirely. She shall be provided for—like me—or even better.

DOCTOR

Look here, Katy! Let's end this!

KATY

Certainly—let's end it. To-night you will inform her of your decision to divorce.

DOCTOR

Are you really insane, or—?

KATY

I'm not insane. I'm calm. I'm reasonable.

DOCTOR

Let's settle this once and for all! How much money do you want?

KATY

John!

DOCTOR

Tell me, how much?

KATY

It isn't money that I want. I want you! You!

DOCTOR

Impossible.

KATY

Why impossible, John?

DOCTOR

I thought I could love more than one. I thought I could wrench out of life another passion—but I can't—I can't—

KATY

No matter! At any rate, to-night you do as I tell you or else to-morrow morning I shall present myself to Mrs. Weston. I think it's better, however, for you to arrange matters. It would hurt her less, no doubt.

DOCTOR

(Clenching his fists.)

Oh, you! You!

KATY

I want it! I demand it! I am the most obstinate woman in the world. I have waited for years for this day. You see, then, that it would be useless for you to try to dissuade me, or scare me. . . .

(He looks at her but is unable to answer her.)

What you must think about is the best means of accomplishing my desire.

DOCTOR

(Raising his fist to her.)

I'll—I'll. . . .

(His arms fall limp.)

KATY

Yes, the best thing for you to do is to think the easiest way out of it. I'll help you of course; but you must begin. To-night, mind you! It ought to be easy for you to solve a little problem like this. . . .

(Sits down.)

DOCTOR

(Imploring.)

You claim that you love me, and yet you have no pity on me, on my reputation, on my honor. You are ready to destroy me, to ruin me!

KATY

(Rises and faces him.)

I want it! Do you hear? I want it! I am jealous!

(Laughing bitterly.)

I am jealous of an old woman!

(Seriously.)

She has had you long enough! I want you now! She can't complain. She's had your youth—the best part of you.

DOCTOR

I'd rather die, do you understand? I'd rather cut my throat, blow my brains out—

KATY

(Coldly.)

If you die I shall present myself to court and claim my rights. You see, your wife won't be spared the knowledge. Your death won't help any. I know you, John. You don't want your memory soiled. You don't want her to suffer after your death.

DOCTOR

I'd rather kill her than put her to shame! Do you understand? I'd rather kill her!

KATY

(Meditating.)

That's a good idea!

DOCTOR

What did you say?

KATY

I said it's a good idea!

DOCTOR

What's a good idea?

KATY

For you—to—kill—her!

DOCTOR

Oh! Oh!

KATY

What is life that you make so much fuss about? You ought to know. You see people dying almost every day.

DOCTOR

Murderess!

KATY

A middle-aged woman, if she dies, will only be spared the humiliation of old age, don't you see? Nobody in the world will ever suspect you.

DOCTOR

(Drops into wing-chair.)

Oh!

KATY

It's much better than divorce! Yes, very much better. Yes, yes. She is one too many, don't you see? As I have been for years.

(Silence.)

I must go now, dear.

(Crosses to him.)

Good-night, dear.

(Tries to caress him.)

DOCTOR

(Shouting.)

Don't touch me!

KATY

Don't shout so, dear.

DOCTOR

(Rising quickly and gripping her by the throat.)

I'll—I'll choke you—you!

KATY

(Breaking his grip.)

My death couldn't help you. Besides, you would be sent to prison. You would cause such a scandal. Your wife would die of shame.

(He throws himself on the lounge, unable to speak.)

(Silence.)

Yes, my dear, your idea is the best—the very best.
Always your ideas are good!

*(Goes toward door LEFT, opens it, then turns
to him.)*

To-night—you'll know what to do. . . .

(Exits.)

*(DOCTOR remains seated, elbows on his knees,
head in hands. His hair is disheveled. He is in
despair.)*

CURTAIN.

ACT III

(FIRST VERSION)*

SCENE: *The same.*

TIME: *The next morning.*

AT RISE: *The room is empty for a moment. Enter KATY, followed by NURSE who closes door behind her.*

KATY remains standing, hesitatingly, at the door, looking about her.

NURSE

Won't you sit down, Miss?

KATY

Thanks.

(Remains standing.)

NURSE

Doctor will be in shortly. He is having his breakfast.

KATY

Breakfast?

NURSE

Yes.

(Looking at her watch.)

It is rather late for breakfast—But there were many patients here this morning. More than usual.

* See Note, page 5.

KATY

Did he attend to them?

NURSE

Certainly. You can't send them away, you know.

KATY

And Mrs. Weston?

NURSE

She's quite well.

KATY

Is she home?

NURSE

Surely. She's having breakfast with Doctor, naturally.

(Silence.)

You're the young lady that was here last night, aren't you?

KATY

Yes.

NURSE

You aren't a patient, are you?

KATY

No. . . . I want to see—Mrs. Weston.

NURSE

Mrs. Weston?

KATY

Yes. Tell her that—that Katy—she'll know who it is—wants to see her.

NURSE

Does she expect you, Miss?

KATY

Just tell her that I want to speak to her—alone—please.

NURSE

It's pretty early for a call. I shouldn't like to disturb her. She—

KATY

I'm sure she'll see me.

NURSE

What name did you say?

KATY

Katy.

NURSE

Katy—what?

KATY

Just Katy—that's enough—she'll know. . . .

NURSE

(Looking at her; unconvinced.)

All right. I'll tell her.

(KATY nods.)

(NURSE goes out.)

(KATY walks up and down very much perturbed; then seats herself upon the edge of the lounge.)

(Re-enter NURSE.)

Mrs. Weston will see you directly.

(KATY *nods.*)

(NURSE *leaves.*)

(*Enter* MRS. WESTON.)

MRS. WESTON

Good-morning, Katy.

(KATY *rises and faces her.*)

How have you been? I haven't seen you for—

KATY

For six years.

MRS. WESTON

You left suddenly—I remember. We were very sorry to lose you. I liked you a good deal. We got along very well, didn't we?

KATY

Yes.

(MRS. WESTON *brings down chair.*)

MRS. WESTON

Won't you sit down, please?

(KATY *re-seats herself on the edge of the lounge.*)

(MRS. WESTON *sits opposite her.*)

(*Silence.*)

I remember you said you were going to get married. Am I right?

KATY

Yes.

MRS. WESTON

I was very glad for your sake, but I was sorry to see you go. You, too, were a little sorry to leave us, weren't you?

(KATY makes no answer.)

You promised to come and see us now and then, but you never came. I used to speak to Doctor about you. We were wondering what had become of you.

(Looking intently at her.)

You must have had your share of trouble. I can see it in your eyes.

(Silence.)

Life isn't so easy, is it, Katy?

(KATY shakes her head.)

No, not easy at all. But we must accept things as they come—not as we plan them. Isn't it so?

(KATY does not answer.)

I always used to say to Doctor that you would make an excellent wife. You were so capable and devoted! One can't change one's nature. If you are capable as a worker you are naturally, more so, as your own mistress. Although, really, you had a free hand with us, too, didn't you?

KATY

(Weakly.)

Yes—

MRS. WESTON

You were like a member of the family. But you have your own home now, and that's quite a responsibility.

(KATY scrutinizes her, trying to find out what she's driving at.)

It's more difficult in a way than managing a city.

KATY

(*Determined.*)

Mrs. Weston—

MRS. WESTON

Men are so helpless, too—and if there happens to be a child—

KATY

(*Grasping the opportunity.*)

I have a child!

MRS. WESTON

(*Calmly.*)

Yes.

KATY

And his father—

MRS. WESTON

(*Interrupting.*)

Boys are a little easier to raise than girls. . . .

KATY

His father is—

MRS. WESTON

Girls nowadays—since women have become freer—

KATY

(Rising, firmly.)

His father is—Dr. Weston!

MRS. WESTON

(Looks at her for a long moment, then quietly.)

I know.

KATY

You know?

MRS. WESTON

Yes. My husband told me.

KATY

(Sitting down.)

He told you?

MRS. WESTON

Last night.

KATY

Last night?

(Silence.)

He has a child by me. He hasn't any by you. A childless woman is not really a wife.

MRS. WESTON

That depends upon the husband. If he wanted a child and the woman could not have any or did not want any—then—perhaps—

KATY

He is the father of my child! I am his true wife! It's the child that—

MRS. WESTON

I imagine the man is to decide that, Katy.

KATY

(Rising.)

No, the woman! And I have decided it! He is going to be my—my husband! He has been yours long enough!

MRS. WESTON

(Continuing with her usual calm.)

Marriages aren't made for a limited time, are they?

KATY

They are broken when the man prefers another woman.

MRS. WESTON

Does he prefer you?

KATY

He preferred me once—one night—one marvelous night—

MRS. WESTON

That surely is not sufficient, is it?

KATY

It is, if the love was great enough to result in a child—a son—and if his wife could never make him a father.

MRS. WESTON

We shall not discuss that. It's rather—too intimate.

KATY

Nothing is too intimate any more. For years I've been treated no better than a dog.

MRS. WESTON

I am sure Dr. Weston could never treat any one as a dog.

KATY

I was the only exception.

MRS. WESTON

You are exaggerating, I am certain. He—

KATY

He treated me like a dog in order to spare you any pain. He tortured me that you might live in peace—serenely—

MRS. WESTON

It was wrong of him not to tell me. He should have known me better.

KATY

You were the purest woman in the world. You were the noblest. You were this and you were that; but I could be treated in any shabby way.

MRS. WESTON

He did not mean to be cruel.

KATY

How he longed to have us both dead!

(Ironically; triumphantly.)

But we didn't die!

MRS. WESTON

I'm glad you didn't die.

(Sadly.)

And I'm sorry I continued to live.

(KATY is taken aback for a moment, but immediately regains her composure.)

KATY

People do live too long! They are old and ill—and yet they won't die!

MRS. WESTON

(Bitterly.)

That's true! But I would have died willingly for my husband had he wished me to. If my death made him happy, I would die any time—as you desired—

(Silence.)

(KATY watches MRS. WESTON.)

KATY

There is no reason for it any more. Now you may go on living.

MRS. WESTON

(Ironically.)

Thank you.

KATY

You mustn't think that I am jealous of you. Why should I be jealous of you?

MRS. WESTON

There is no reason that I can see.

KATY

Am I not younger?

MRS. WESTON

Yes.

KATY

The mother of his son?

MRS. WESTON

Yes.

(Silence.)

KATY

You were good to me.

MRS. WESTON

I am glad you remember that, at least, Katy.

KATY

I remember everything! But I also remember that because of you he has despised me.

MRS. WESTON

Are you quite certain that it is only because of me?

KATY

Yes! Yes! He was afraid to hurt you!

MRS. WESTON

He can't be such a brute then, Katy, can he?

KATY

A brute? Who said he was a brute? He treated me brutally—but I know how tender he can be.

(MRS. WESTON *sighs deeply.*)

No, I'm not jealous of you! I don't care if you continue to live! It doesn't matter to me! But you must give him up! He must be mine from now on!

MRS. WESTON

(*Calmly.*)

If he wishes—

(KATY *is taken aback.*)

KATY

What did you say?

MRS. WESTON

I said—if he wishes—I shall give him up.

KATY

If he wishes it or not! He must be mine! I love him!

MRS. WESTON

(*Quietly.*)

I love him, too.

KATY

(*Not paying attention to her remark.*)

He was anxious not to hurt his wife and his reputation.

MRS. WESTON

And what's wrong in loving his wife and his reputation?

KATY

He would have loved me had he only dared to. I know it! At times I could see something in his eyes—something beautiful. . . . It was for moments like those that I was willing to endure anything.

(Sitting down.)

Do you understand now why for years I let things go?

MRS. WESTON

I understand.

KATY

Do you see why I never molested you?

MRS. WESTON

I see—

(Silence.)

Poor child! I'm sorry—

KATY

(Rises.)

But now it's all over! Now he must come with me!

MRS. WESTON

(Trying to be calm.)

You can't compel a man to leave his wife.

KATY

I can! I can bring him to court for seduction! I can stir up a scandal! The excellent Dr. Weston, respected

by everybody, seduced his maid! The papers will speak about it. The people—

MRS. WESTON

And your reputation?

KATY

(Laughing sarcastically.)

My reputation? Why, I'd become a heroine. People would offer me jobs, money, and—

MRS. WESTON

I mean to yourself.

KATY

I don't care! He must come with me!

MRS. WESTON

Even if he doesn't want to? Even if—?

KATY

(Determined.)

In a week's time, if you don't agree to separate, I shall take the case to court.

(Goes to door.)

MRS. WESTON

(Rising.)

Katy—

(KATY stops.)

Katy. . . . Katy!

KATY

(Turning.)

Well—?

(She is motioned to sit down.)

No!

MRS. WESTON

I beg of you—please—

*(KATY moves slowly toward lounge.)**(MRS. WESTON sits beside her.)*

You will do what you want anyhow, but—

KATY

(Interrupting.)

I will!

MRS. WESTON,

Won't you be good enough to listen to me for a few minutes?

KATY

It's useless.

MRS. WESTON

It may be. And it's for just that reason that you ought not to begrudge listening to me.

(KATY shrugs her shoulders.)

It isn't easy to say things when your heart is broken, Katy—you ought to know it—

(KATY remains unmoved.)

Do you wish to ruin Doctor?

(KATY does not answer.)

Do you really love him, Katy?

KATY

(Not looking at MRS. WESTON.)

I do! I do!

MRS. WESTON

I am so happy you love him, for I know that if you really love him, you cannot hurt him, can you? You have been very brave.

KATY

(Ironically.)

Very brave!

(Silence for a short minute, then irritated, almost shouting.)

God!

(She rises.)

It's all your fault! Your fault! You have had his love too long!

MRS. WESTON

Too long? Even a thousand years of his love—

KATY

(Still shouting.)

Stop! Stop!

MRS. WESTON

I'm sorry if—

KATY

I'm determined to have what is mine! He belongs to me! I don't want my child to be tainted all his life, and when he grows up hate me and think I was a—

MRS. WESTON

Your child will love you. You are a good mother. We shall take care of him, Katy, I promise you.

KATY

(Laughing hysterically.)

Take care of him? Yes! Give him a little money—and tell him to stay away!

MRS. WESTON

It's going to be different from now on. He may come here whenever he wishes. Doctor will be kind to him, you'll see.

KATY

No! I don't want any charity for him! I want what is due him!

MRS. WESTON

I should like to adopt him.

KATY

Adopt him! Take him away from me! How dare you!

MRS. WESTON

I didn't mean to—I don't want to take your child away from you. But I love him without ever having seen him. He is Doctor's son, therefore, dear to me. Katy, be reasonable.

(Takes hold of KATY's hands.)

KATY

Let me go! You are trying to ensnare me with promises. You are trying to weaken me. But you can't do it!

MRS. WESTON

(Holding her hands tight.)

Doctor and I have lived nearly half our lives together—Let us spend the rest of our days in peace.

KATY

I, too, want peace!

MRS. WESTON

How can you expect to have it if you cause so much misery? Think of it, Katy! Had Doctor done what you persuaded him, almost forced him to do—would you have any peace now? What you intend to do now is worse even. It's not so terrible to die; but to live in disgrace and misery—

(KATY, visibly touched, is silent.)

Katy, we are women. We, surely, ought to understand each other.

KATY

What do you want me to understand?

MRS. WESTON

You are young, you are pretty. You can easily find a man to love you.

KATY

(Laughing bitterly.)

A man to love me! That's easy enough. But a man whom I can love—that's different!

(Tearing herself away from MRS. WESTON.)

I hate all men!

MRS. WESTON

You'll learn to love another one. You'll be happy, Katy.

KATY

(Ironically.)

Happy! Happy!

MRS. WESTON

You will be! Youth forgets.

KATY

The old have invented all sorts of consolations for those they hurt.

MRS. WESTON

Is there anything more cruel than youth! Are you the only one to be considered? Have I given him nothing? A wife is not meant only to bring children into the world. She is her husband's companion, his friend, his inspiration. Motherhood is not merely physical. Every woman is a mother but she must change her man into her son or else she loses him! I have given my husband what was necessary to his development—to his happiness. I've been the source of his ambitions—the origin of

his success. You are his child's mother; but I am his mother; just as if I had given him birth, and he belongs to me! You speak of love—there is something greater than love—there is understanding.

(KATY *is about to open door.*)

MRS. WESTON

Katy! You still have your life before you. You shall be taken care of. You shall be like our own child, and when we are gone—we have nobody to leave our money to—so—

(KATY *laughs ironically.*)

(MRS. WESTON *sees the futility of her plea, makes a gesture of despair and turns away.*)

(*Enter DOCTOR from door RIGHT.*)

(*Upon seeing him, KATY stops short in her laughter.*)

(DOCTOR *takes in the situation and walks over to MRS. WESTON.*)

John!

DOCTOR

Yes, dear.

MRS. WESTON

We have loved each other for many years—

DOCTOR

Yes—

MRS. WESTON

It doesn't seem long at all. We were so sure that nothing would ever come between us. It wasn't your

fault. I'm sure of that. It just happened—just happened. We have been so happy together—and now the gods are jealous of us, John—

DOCTOR

Please—dearest—

MRS. WESTON

Yes—yes—we must sacrifice—to appease them. We were too happy together.

(KATY *watches them intently.*)

DOCTOR

Yes—

MRS. WESTON

We must find a way out of this. I don't want you to be dragged through courts—to have your name besmirched—

DOCTOR

Nothing matters, dearest, except your love.

MRS. WESTON

I shall love you always, but—

(DOCTOR *presses her against him—her words hardly audible.*)

You are needed by so many people, while I. . . .

DOCTOR

You are needed by me.

MRS. WESTON

(*Determined.*)

She is the one to stay here. I'll go!

DOCTOR

No! No!

MRS. WESTON

Yes, it must be!

DOCTOR

No, dear, no!

MRS. WESTON

Yes, dear, yes! The memory of our years together will console me.

DOCTOR

Nothing will console me. I cannot be without you.

MRS. WESTON

We must be strong, dear. We must conquer our sorrow.

DOCTOR

I cannot be strong without you. I cannot!

MRS. WESTON

You will learn. . . .

DOCTOR

Never!

MRS. WESTON

(*About to leave.*)

I must go! Can't you see, dear? I must!

DOCTOR

You—leave—me—?

(MRS. WESTON *nods sadly, and opens door*

RIGHT.)

KATY

Wait—wait! A little while ago you said there was something greater than love. You said it was understanding. I understand. . . .

MRS. WESTON

(Hopefully.)

What, Katy?

KATY

I understand why you were ready to sacrifice yourself. . . .

(Turning to DOCTOR; indignantly.)

I understand, John, why you were cruel to me. I understand why you could never care for me, although I brought you joy and adventure. I was blind. Blind! Now I see. . . . You're afraid of passion! You're afraid of responsibility! You're afraid of standing alone! You don't want youth! You don't want love! You don't want woman! All you want is the care and protection of a mother!

(To MRS. WESTON; disdainfully.)

You needn't go away any more. I understand it all now. . . . He belongs to you!

(DOCTOR and MRS. WESTON remain stunned while KATY leaves resolutely.)

CURTAIN.

ACT III (SECOND VERSION)*

SCENE: *The same. There are indications of lack of order and care.*

TIME: *One month after Act II. A stormy evening; occasional flashes of lightning and crashes of thunder.*

AT RISE: DOCTOR WESTON *is sitting at his desk. KATY, overdressed and bejeweled, is sitting on the lounge opposite him.*

DOCTOR

(Listening.)

What—what was that noise?

KATY

It's nothing.

DOCTOR

I thought—I heard—

KATY

It's the wind.

DOCTOR

Are you sure it's the wind?

KATY

Certainly. Can't you see how the rain beats against the window? It's a storm.

* See Note, page 5.

DOCTOR

(Looking closely at the window.)

Yes, it's true. The rain beats against the window. It's a storm.

KATY

Besides, I sent the patients away, and locked the door.

DOCTOR

Weren't they surprised?

KATY

Why should they be surprised? I told them that you were a little ill to-day—indisposed—and to return to-morrow or the day after.

DOCTOR

And they said nothing?

KATY

Oh, one said, "A doctor can cure everybody, but himself."

DOCTOR

It's very true. So they did say something.

KATY

(Shrugging her shoulders.)

A woman said she hoped you'd be well soon.

DOCTOR

(Mechanically repeating.)

She hoped I'd be well soon. Was she very ironic about it?

KATY

Why should she be ironic?

DOCTOR

She said, "I hope," didn't she?

KATY

Yes.

DOCTOR

What is more ironic than hope? People hope for ever so many things. And what comes of all their hopes? Nothing. Nothing.

KATY

She didn't think of anything in particular. It's a way of being polite.

DOCTOR

(Not paying attention to her remark.)

The poor man hopes to become rich. He dies old, and he is still poor. A sick man hopes to get well. He asks me: "Doctor, I'll be well soon, won't I?" "Yes, of course," I answer, "provided you do what I am telling you to do." Two months later he is dead.

KATY

But you aren't ill, John, I—

DOCTOR

(Continuing his idea.)

What comes of all their hopes?

KATY

But that has nothing to do with what the woman said.

DOCTOR

How do you know? People say the most terrible things in just such simple sentences. People say, for instance, "Everybody must die," and they continue eating their dinner. Or they say, "Husbands betray their wives, and wives their husbands," and they laugh.

KATY

Please, John, let's not talk about this. You are well. You are not really ill. With you, it's simply—

DOCTOR

Oh, as for that—I am quite well. Only yesterday I operated—oh, a very slight case—a child had an abscess on the cheek. I operated with this scalpel—

(Pointing to a small instrument.)

Just an incision—but how it relieved him! I call it an operation. It was nothing at all, of course. You could have done it, but your hand needs to be steady and—your thoughts too. At times there is such a temptation—you have no idea—you can't imagine—

KATY

Please put that knife away.

DOCTOR

(Continuing his idea.)

I thought, as I made the incision—supposing I slide a little farther down—from the cheek to the throat—a little distance—like this—

KATY

(Rising.)

John! Put the knife away!

DOCTOR

A knife is a tiny thing but it can kill a man.

KATY

(Taking the scalpel out of his hand.)

You scare me so—

(Putting the instrument at the other end of the desk.)

Don't think about such things!

DOCTOR

You'd imagine that to kill a man, you'd need something large, something gigantic. But instead, a little knife that opens an abscess—

KATY

John, please, don't talk that way!

DOCTOR

But you hardly need anything at all to kill—Just a few drops of—

KATY

John!

DOCTOR

That's all.

(Silence.)

KATY

Look at the rain, John.

DOCTOR

What did you say?

KATY

I said—watch the rain. The rain is beautiful. You always liked the rain.

DOCTOR

I liked the rain? Whoever told you I liked the rain?

KATY

Why, you—

DOCTOR

I hate the rain! The rain, too, can kill people. . . .

KATY

The rain is good for the ground. Without the rain, we'd starve. The rain makes flowers grow. The rain—

DOCTOR

Don't speak about it!

KATY

I won't speak about it, dear, if you don't want me to. Once you did like to hear me speak about it, though.

DOCTOR

The rain kills people! Everything kills people! First they make you live, then they kill you.

KATY

Then let's live first! Let's live!

DOCTOR

Even those you love, for whom you'd gladly give your life. . . . Time passes—a year—two—twenty—but the day comes—oh, it's sure to come—when you kill them. Maybe it's just time that kills. Maybe nothing kills, but time—time. . . .

(Suddenly stiffening up.)

Did—you—hear—? Did you—?

KATY

It's nothing, nothing at all.

DOCTOR

Oh, yes, this time—

KATY

Nothing but the storm, I tell you.

DOCTOR

It—it scared me so—

KATY

You are so foolish. There is absolutely no reason for you to be scared.

DOCTOR

No reason?

KATY

Everything—is forgotten. You're the only one that still remembers. Everybody else has forgotten.

DOCTOR

(Pathetically.)

Forgotten. . . .

(Silence.)

Oh, The nurse! The nurse! Where is she? Maybe it was she—

KATY

(Imitating him.)

The nurse! The nurse!

(Trying to laugh.)

Haha! Foolish little John! What's a nurse to be afraid of?

(Turning the conversation quickly.)

I gave her a day off. I told her that I'd take care of you to-day.

DOCTOR

What did she say?

KATY

What should she say? She was glad to get a day off.

DOCTOR

But—I mean—what did she say about your being here—and giving orders?

KATY

I told her that I'm your niece. I suppose a niece has the right to take care of her uncle who feels indisposed, hasn't she?

DOCTOR

A niece? And—did she believe you?

KATY

Why not? Why shouldn't she believe me?

DOCTOR

And where did she go?

KATY

To the theater, and from there to a friend's house.

DOCTOR

In weather like this—?

KATY

It's right around the corner.

DOCTOR

Did she really believe you?

KATY

Why not? I look rich enough. I'm dressed well—

DOCTOR

Yes—

KATY

You say "yes" just like that, but you don't even look at me.

DOCTOR

I looked at you.

KATY

I'm pretty. Anybody would believe that I'm your niece. I'm very pretty!

(Standing up.)

Look at me, John, am I not pretty?

(She turns all around like a fashionable "mannequin.")

Well, am I not pretty?

DOCTOR

Yes—

KATY

(Trying to be cheerful.)

On the street, men look at me. Some even flirt with me. One man raised his hat. I giggled. It seemed so funny. If you dress well, men like you. Don't they, John? . . . Look at me!

DOCTOR

I'm looking at you.

KATY

Not like that. Look at me like other men. Open your eyes wide, or lower your lids, until your eyes are nearly shut—and sigh—like other men. Don't just look at me

as though I were a chair or the wall. I'm a woman, John! I'm pretty! I'm young! Look at me!

(Approaching him.)

Touch me. Go ahead. Touch my arm, my breast. Touch me! I'm very nice to feel. Any man would be delighted to touch me. But I don't allow them. I never did, John! No man has ever touched me, except you. And no man shall ever touch me.

(DOCTOR covers his face with his hands.)

John, dear, don't hide your face! Let me see it.

(Patting his head.)

Oh, how I love your head, John! It's so beautiful, so wise, so sad! Let me caress it.

(He wards her off.)

Please let me caress your head. Why do you hide from me? No one in the world—no one has ever loved you as I do. No one.

DOCTOR

Go away!

KATY

No, dear, I love you!

DOCTOR

Go away!

KATY

You have no one but me, John.

(Telephone rings.)

DOCTOR

(Standing up with a jerk.)

Who—who—?

KATY

Wait, I'll answer. Wait.

(At the phone.)

Yes, Dr. Weston's office. I'm sorry, but he's indisposed. He cannot come to-day. . . . No, nothing serious—but in this weather—it might prove dangerous. . . . To-morrow probably, or in a few days. . . . Good-bye.

DOCTOR

Who was it?

KATY

A patient. Who else could it be? I told him you can't come to-day.

DOCTOR

And what did he say?

KATY

Nothing, except that he hopes you'll be well soon.

DOCTOR

He hopes—

KATY

What else could he say? It's perfectly natural.

DOCTOR

(Reseating himself.)

Perfectly natural. . . .

(Silence.)

KATY

I should have come here before. But I didn't dare to. I was afraid. Just as you are afraid. The tiniest noise upset me. But now that I'm near you, that I see you—now I have courage. Now I know there is no more danger possible. We are safe! You've nothing to fear. I could tell by the way the nurse spoke to me. By the way patients asked for you. Everything is forgotten.

(DOCTOR *strikes the desk with his fist, rhythmically, monotonously.*)

John!

(*He continues to strike.*)

Please, don't do that, John! It's terrible! I can feel it!

DOCTOR

You feel it? I hit the desk and you feel it?

KATY

Yes, it's terrible! You frighten me.

DOCTOR

I thought there was nothing to fear. You said so a moment ago.

KATY

Nothing—from the others. There is everything to fear from ourselves—always.

DOCTOR

And do you think I was ever afraid of others?

KATY

Let's forget it, John! There are some things that are better buried deeply.

DOCTOR

(Laughing ironically.)

Better buried. So I thought—

KATY

Please—you'll only irritate yourself. You'll get really ill, dear.

DOCTOR

Don't worry.

KATY

I do worry.

DOCTOR

I shall not go insane. My brain is like asbestos. There's fire all around it, but it won't burn.

(Stops short.)

Even that night—even then—

KATY

No! No! please! Don't speak about it!

DOCTOR

Even then—my brain was clear—cool—and what flames surrounded it!

KATY

Oh, oh!

(DOCTOR remains silent and buries his face in his palms.)

(Approaching him closely.)

John, do you remember once—long ago, you said: “Let us forget every one and everything? Let us remember only that we are two tiny human beings?” Do you remember?

(He does not answer.)

Two tiny human beings, who may die to-morrow? To-morrow is knocking at our door.

DOCTOR

If it knocked at the door, don't you think I'd hurry to open?

KATY

No, no—you mustn't think of it! We must live to-day! To-day is so short! You hardly have time to breathe, and it's gone, John. You have taught me to realize how quickly the days pass.

DOCTOR

I lied to you! I lied! A day is long—very long!

(Silence.)

KATY

John, I know you have terrible thoughts about me. I know what you think of me. I can hear every thought of yours, as though it shrieked out at me. But, John, you ought to mingle with your thoughts a little pity for me. It's because you made me realize how short the day is that I have longed to live! I have been dead for ever so long! You must pity me! After all, it was a little your fault, too—

(He looks at her.)

No, no—I don't mean to blame you. I've no right to blame any one.

(Stops a moment.)

And yet—and yet—I feel that perhaps I'm not altogether guilty. It seems that a power greater than myself—forced me to do everything I did—to want what I wanted. We are such tiny little beings, John. You said so yourself. Everything kills us. Perhaps everything makes us act in one way or another. How do we know? I don't blame you, John. But you must not blame me so terribly either.

(Stops short.)

Do you remember that night? If it hadn't rained you wouldn't have asked me to stay in. I would have gone to the theater. But it rained. . . . You were afraid I'd catch cold.

(Giggles lightly.)

You were so anxious about the silly little maid! Now, you'd let her stay out in the snow, knee-deep, like her father, the whole night. Oh, yes, I understand. Now she has become something else—something horrible.

(Stops again.)

Well, you also had wine and she—she—postponed her coming home. One patient died that day—another was dying—you were very sad, very lonesome. You explained to me that there was really no difference be-

tween one person and another. You thought that age mattered, but I believe that even age doesn't matter.
(*Stops for a moment.*)

How could we help what followed? How could we help what happened? One thing drags the other after it. Don't look at me that way, John! Don't hold me entirely responsible!

(*Silence.*)

Do you remember, dear—you said, "If people only shared a secret they could not hate each other as they do." I remember everything—everything that happened that night—

(*Dreamily.*)

Every word that you said—

(*Looks meaningly at him.*)

Every touch. . . . Well, we once had a secret—now we have two. We cannot hate each other, can we, dear?

DOCTOR

(*Slowly and quietly.*)

I hate you!

KATY

John!

DOCTOR

I hate you!

KATY

No matter, John, no matter. You may hate me. You never did love me. I was simply an hour's distraction

for you. But I love you—you can't stop me from loving you, can you?

(Waits for his answer which does not come.)

You can't! You can't! You hate me—But you need me.

(Triumphantly.)

You need me!

DOCTOR

No!

KATY

Oh, yes, you can't be alone.

DOCTOR

I can.

KATY

You cannot! You are too nervous. Everything upsets and bewilders you—the wind—the rain—the ringing of the telephone. You hate me—but you need me.

DOCTOR

I don't need you.

KATY

You can't be alone, I tell you. You're accustomed to have a woman about you. A woman that loves you. You can't have a stranger—one who doesn't know—

DOCTOR

I need no one.

KATY

You need no one? To-morrow or the day after, without being aware of it, you'll confess. You'll say one

thing and another. You'll show nervousness. Somebody—the nurse—a patient—will begin to suspect—will tell a neighbor. The kindly neighbor will add something to it—until—

DOCTOR

Stop! Stop!

KATY

Yes, until you are caught in a trap. I know it! You need me to smooth things out—to explain—to laugh even, if necessary.

DOCTOR

Do you think I care if I fall into a trap?

KATY

Come, come, don't be childish, John. If you hadn't cared wouldn't you have gone to the police long ago?

DOCTOR

I will go.

KATY

Oh, no, you won't.

DOCTOR

(*Angered.*)

I tell you, I will!

KATY

Do you think I'll let you? I'll watch you—follow every step of yours. I'll lock the office. I'll tell your patients that you are terribly sick—that you can't see them for a long time to come. I'll discharge the nurse.

DOCTOR

You can't stop me from opening the window and shouting, "I killed my wife! I killed my wife!"

KATY

(Covering his mouth.)

Don't shout!

DOCTOR

Ah, you see, you see?

KATY

I'll tell everybody that you're crazy—that her death upset you.

DOCTOR

I'll tell them that I poisoned her.

KATY

(Laughing nervously.)

What proofs can you show? Isn't it more likely that she did it herself—by mistake? They'll lock you up in an insane asylum.

DOCTOR

(Raising his fists.)

Oh, you, you! I've done what you wanted me to do. Will you never let me alone? Will you never—never—

(Covers his face in desperation.)

KATY

Why don't you understand me? You can't love me, but you ought to at least understand me.

DOCTOR

Go away!

KATY

How can I go away? Had I been able to go away, wouldn't I have done it long ago?

(Silence.)

We are destined for each other. It can't be helped. We must begin together. Maybe not here. We can move out, or leave the country. If you haven't enough money, I can work. Oh, how happy I am that I have you—that there is no one else to claim you! Don't look at me that way—I am happy, happy!

DOCTOR

You—dare—

KATY

I would have committed a thousand murders for you. And afterwards, having you, I would have forgotten everything. My crime would have seemed nothing to me. No, I shall not leave you. If you chase me out—I shall denounce you myself. Do you hear?

DOCTOR

(Scared.)

You—you—will—

KATY

No, no, my dear. How could I hurt you? But you see—you don't want to be found out, do you? Of course not, dear. You cannot spoil a perfect life, a spotless

reputation. I know it. Oh, I understand you so well. You don't understand me—but I understand you—perfectly. To you Dr. John Weston is another man. You cannot ruin him. Am I not right, dear? You don't mind being ruined yourself—you don't mind suffering, but Dr. John Weston you cannot hurt—can you, dear?

(He remains silent.)

And you don't want anybody to discuss her—I know it! . . .

(Laughing lightly, ironically.)

I'm jealous—jealous of a dead woman. First I was jealous of an old woman—now of a dead woman.

(Stops short.)

John, if you loved me as you did her, for one day only—then—then—you might chase me out—chase me out as you would a dog. Then you might even kill me. One day? To-day! Just until to-morrow! John!

(He remains unmoved.)

John!

(Tenderly—almost whispering.)

John, do you know what I did? Guess! Go ahead! Guess! Be a sport—as I was—that night.

(He remains silent.)

Well, I'll tell you anyhow. I brought two bottles of old wine. What do you think of that, dear?

(He looks at her, but makes no reply.)

I knew it would surprise you.

(Stops short.)

Look, dear, it rains—just like that night—and nobody is home—just the two of us. Isn't it wonderful? It took more than six years for us to be alone—here—in the same place—as then.

(Looking at him intently.)

You are sad. Let me cheer you up, dear, just as I did then. I drank with you. We sang; I danced; I played the harp. You became so cheerful, so happy! How we loved that night! All that happened since is nothing—nothing at all, dear. Just a nightmare. That night alone is real!

(Getting closer to him.)

To-night, dear, let us love as we did then. To-morrow let the nightmare begin once more! I don't care! It doesn't matter! . . . I'm going to bring in the wine.

(DOCTOR makes a gesture of disapproval.)

I shall serve you to-night. I shall be your slave.

(Laughs gaily while she reaches the door.)

DOCTOR

Don't!

KATY

Sit still. I know where everything is.

(DOCTOR remains sitting, his head between his palms.)

(KATY, *humming*, reappears a moment later with tray, two bottles of wine and two glasses which she places next to DOCTOR. Opens a bottle and fills glasses.)

Now we shall drink to the beautiful lady—you know—the beautiful lady who plays on the windowpane—

(*Handing DOCTOR a glass.*)

Drink, John, drink!

(DOCTOR *makes no motion of accepting the glass.*)

(*She presses hers against his lips.*)

Drink, dear! To-morrow you are free! You'll do what you please with your slave. You'll drive her out—as—what was her name in the Bible—? Hagar! She was driven into the desert with her son. I am Hagar! I'll go away with my son—to-morrow! But to-night, to-night we must drink together. Drink! Let us forget! What are things anyway that we should try so hard to remember them? Drink and forget!

(DOCTOR *snatches the glass out of her hand and throws it on the floor where it breaks with a crash, then walks over to the lounge, sinking into it.*)

(KATY *is taken aback for a moment—then laughing nervously.*)

Allegría! Allegría! It's a sign of joy! Here take mine!

(Holding her glass to his lips.)

(DOCTOR empties the glass.)

(KATY utters a cry of joy.)

Oh, John, my dear, my love!

(She refills glass.)

(DOCTOR drinks.)

It's good, John, isn't it?

(Kissing him.)

But your lips are so much better! Your lips get me more drunk than wine. Let me kiss them again, let me!

(She manages to kiss him in spite of his opposition.)

(DOCTOR recoils.)

To-night, to-night your lips are mine, John—mine!

(Raising her glass high.)

To your lips!

(She drinks a bit and gives him the rest.)

Drink, John, drink! You must! I said that to-night I was your slave. It's not true. To-night you are the slave. I am your queen! Drink! I command you! Slave!

(DOCTOR drinks.)

(SHE laughs and embraces him fervently.)

My dear slave!

DOCTOR

(Trying to push her away.)

Don't touch me!

KATY

I'm not old, John. My skin is not yellow. I don't taste sour. I taste like honey—

(Getting closer to him.)

Like fresh honey. Taste me, I command you!

(Kissing him passionately.)

(Opening the second bottle of wine.)

Now let us drink to—Life! We are alive, John! Do you realize it? We are alive! To-morrow who knows? Think of it, so many people are dead—so many are dying—but we are alive—we two—John and Katy—two tiny human beings that anything can kill! We are alive! Drink to the beautiful lady! Guess who the beautiful lady is, guess!

(DOCTOR drinks.)

It's Katy! Katy! Hehehehehe! Katy is the beautiful lady—the harpist—and John is the harp.

(She drinks again, then places her head upon his chest.)

You are my harp—

(Strumming upon his chest.)

Tralalalalalalalala—tralalalalalalala—

(Suddenly.)

I want to dance for you, my King! I want to dance!

(Puts a record on the phonograph.)

(Dances unsteadily, lasciviously.)

Do you remember—my love—what you called me—
that night? Salomé! Salomé!

(She dances with abandon.)

I am Salomé! Your head, slave! Your beautiful head!
I want your head!

(She continues to dance.)

DOCTOR

(Rising abruptly, struck with an idea.)

You—want—my head?

(Crosses to desk.)

(KATY continues to dance.)

*(DOCTOR picks up scalpel, handles it nervously
for a moment and puts it into his pocket;
then slowly and deliberately he enters his
office, closing the door behind him, softly.)*

KATY

Is his Majesty pleased—with Salomé's dancing?

*(Turns for a reply, realizes the DOCTOR is not
in the room, stops dancing and goes quickly
to office doors, throwing them wide open.)*

Where is my King?

(Remains transfixed with horror.)

(Telephone rings.)

(She stares, moves slowly toward it, and answers it whimpering hysterically.)

Dr. Weston? Dr. Weston! Dead—dead—

(Receiver drops out of her hand.)

(She sinks slowly to the floor and breaks into loud sobbing.)

END OF PLAY.

PS 3509 .L4 I6 1928

Eldridge, Paul, 1888-

The intruder

